

International School Hamburg

**COLLEGE
APPLICATION
HANDBOOK**



1. Introduction	4
2. Where In The World To Go?	8
Australia	8
North America	10
Canada.....	10
USA.....	12
Europe	14
Conditions for studying in the EU	14
Germany.....	14
Netherlands	16
Switzerland.....	16
Italy.....	17
United Kingdom.....	17
US Style Universities in Europe, the Middle East and Asia (American Colleges Overseas)	19
Asia	20
Japan	20
Others	21
Gap Year	21
3. How to Choose Colleges	22
4. About you	24
5. College applications to the USA	26
How decisions are made	26
General Types of Colleges/Universities (USA)	29
Application Plans and Types	31
The Forms (and other requirements)	34
Application Essay	34
Teacher Recommendations	38
Counsellor Recommendations	38
International Applicants	38
Financial Statement Required for a US Visa.....	39
Sending Your Application	39
Extracurricular Activities	41
Financial Assistance and Scholarships	43
Applying for Financial Assistance	45
Reviewing Your Financial Aid Package	47
Sources of Information	48

6. General Sources of Information about Universities and Careers	49
APPENDIX I General Information	51
1. TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN ADMISSIONS	51
2. Questions to ask college representatives – all countries	52
APPENDIX II (USA)	53
1. Glossary	53
2. Information about Careers.....	58
3. General College Sites	59
4. Websites – financial aid.....	60
5. Information about Visas and Immigration.....	61
6. SAT and ACT Test Dates for 2010/2011.....	62
7. The SAT or the ACT	63
APPENDIX III Germany	69
1. Converting the IB to an Abitur (Germany)	69
APPENDIX IV Reference materials (USA and UK)	74
APPENDIX V Suggested Reading for Parents, 1st Year Students and Education Professionals generally	76

1. Introduction

Welcome to the new International School Hamburg College Application Handbook.

The aim of this handbook is to provide as much information as possible to students and parents about how to identify what careers might suit them, where to pursue this and then how to get into the university of choice. It can be a daunting task but with organisation and good communication between the student, his/her family and the College Counsellor it can be undertaken and completed successfully. Research and planning are crucial for the student to find their preferred destination.

Students are guided through the application process so that they identify colleges that they have a realistic chance of gaining admittance to and that will suit their temperament and personality. The first step in this process is looking at oneself and through this identifying the type of college that will best help you fulfil your educational and career wishes.

The goal of this guide is to help you figure out where you'd like to go and to maximize your chances of being admitted there. By knowing what the people who will be reading your application are looking for, you'll have an easier time presenting yourself as the sort of person they want to admit.

Unfortunately, and keeping in mind that college application books, websites and multiple other supports exist, there is no guide or person who can give you a foolproof, step-by-step plan for getting into college. Even if you are totally methodical and highly organised in determining where you want to go and what you need to do to gain admittance, your application is still in the hands of subjective admission officers.

Applicants should always investigate at the start of the process whether there are likely to be any visa requirements if they study abroad. Also you should find out if the final qualification you receive is accepted in your home country or the country you anticipate living and working in.

Note: the terms used in different countries can create confusion so as much consistency as possible will be aimed for. Thus, the words college and university will be used for all institutions of higher education worldwide. So, although the word school is used in the

USA to denote places of higher education, it will not be used in this document, except when referring to secondary education.

However, while much of what is contained in this document pertains most particularly to the process involved in applying to the USA it can be used as general guidance for the process of choosing careers and colleges in any other country too.

The College Counsellor provides the following services:

- Knowledge about colleges, careers and application processes;
- support and advice for students and parents throughout the application process;
- resources about colleges by maintaining guides and prospectuses in the school library;
- information on Summer programmes;
- advice and feedback on application essays;
- information on financial aid and scholarships;
- information on entrance tests for US universities (SAT, ACT);
- support and guidance after graduation.

The ISH College Counsellor can provide the following documents for students as part of their applications:

- Transcript of courses and grades during Grades 9-12 – a copy of Honours, Awards and Activities can be added if required;
- ISH School Profile;
- Secondary School Reports, Mid Year Reports, Final Reports;
- Counsellor recommendation letters;
- Teacher recommendation letters;
- Copy of ISH Diploma (after graduation);
- Final transcript (after graduation).

The ISH school transcript contains information about a student's courses and grades during grades 9 to 12. It also contains information about our grading system. It must be stamped and sent to the university in a sealed envelope. Students should request

transcripts in advance of deadlines as they occasionally need to be amended. The reverse side of the transcript can contain some additional information – a list of your honours, awards and activities (you must provide the necessary documentation to Mrs. Ronai (secondary school secretary) for this).

The College Counsellor is responsible for assembling documents for applications. However, students must take responsibility for certain parts of their applications. They must ensure that their record of Honours, Awards and Activities is complete and accurate, verified by their teachers and then handed to Mrs Ronai as early as possible. Students must also request their letters of recommendation from teachers well in advance of their application deadline.

The ISH School Profile gives a brief descriptive summary of ISH, its academic programmes and curriculum, grading systems, graduation requirements, IB scores history, student activities and college destinations.

Students' applications may also contain additional information, e.g. an essay/personal statement/letter of motivation. Students can include a CV/Resume and a letter of recommendation from somebody outside the school that can provide a strong insight into their character.

The essay should focus on the writer's personality and uniqueness. All of the following should be included if appropriate: academic strengths, personal strengths and weaknesses, values, talents, special interests. (Further information on essays can be found later in this document).

Students must take responsibility for sending their test scores (SAT, ACT etc.) to universities.

School documents that are required for the Common Application (USA):–

- Secondary School Report, Mid-Year Report, Final Report,
- Counsellor Recommendation

- Letters of recommendation from teachers
- Copy of School Diploma
- School Profile

Important: applications are time-consuming and deadlines often clash with other important items, such as the Semester 1 exams, ToK presentations and extended essay in Grade 12, thus, it is strongly advised that students get organised early and avoid unnecessary pressure.

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(British English is the language used by ISH in its official documents and communication).

2. Where In The World To Go?

Although the majority of students apply to the UK, US and Germany there are also some applicants to other countries. Many other countries offer excellent quality university education and should be considered.

Australia

Universities in Australia are very open to international students but direct contact with the university that interests you is advised to find out what their specific entry requirements are.

Because Australia is in the southern hemisphere, the academic year begins in February and applications are submitted in September, a few months after you have graduated from school. If you are considering Australia, obviously one of the first questions you need to ask yourself is how you would occupy yourself from the time you graduate until you begin university. It is also important to think about the distances involved and the number of times per year you may be able to travel home. New Zealand and Australia have a reciprocal agreement where students who are citizens of either country can attend universities for in-country fees.

For further information, look at these websites: www.idp.edu.au/, www.studylink.com.au (this is an Australian College and Training Guide) or www.studiesinaustralia.com, www.studyinaustralia.org, www.avcc.edu.au (this website has authoritative information on 39 universities).

There are 43 institutions of higher education enrolling 700,000 students in Australia. Thirty-eight receive Commonwealth funding under the Higher Education Funding Act of 1988 and two universities are private. Nine Australian universities are ECIS members (the Group of 8 universities and the Bond University in Queensland). The Group of Eight is a coalition of Australia's leading universities – they are University of Adelaide, University of Melbourne, Monash University, University of New South Wales, University of Sydney, University of Queensland, University of Western Australia and Australian National University. These eight universities undertake 70% of all research conducted in Australian universities, and attract the majority of government and private

research funding. They enrol over 200,000 students per year and have up to 30,000 international students.

Universities in Australia are self-accrediting with degrees and diplomas in accordance with the Australian Qualifications Framework and are endorsed by the Federal and State governments. Historically Australian universities were similar to British ones but many now have US style structures. In Australia there is no official ranking of universities but there are some publications that publish comparisons. One source is www.detya.gov.au.

Higher education normally consists of two semesters that start in March and July. A bachelor's degree normally takes three years with professional degrees taking longer. Most students are admitted in March but admittance in July is possible but not into all courses.

Australian students (living in Australia or abroad) apply through the state-based Tertiary Admissions Centre for semester one admissions. These Centres manage and promote the application procedure, receive and process applications for most university courses within their state, and inform applicants of outcomes. Each university is responsible the selection of its own students. The Centres calculate standardised tertiary entrance ranks or the University Admissions Index used in the admissions process. These are not scores or grades but are rankings calculated out of 100 in increments of 0.05. entry scores for Australian undergraduate courses are expressed as the Tertiary Entrance Ranks (TER). Different states call these ranks different names, for example, in Victoria ENTER (Equivalent Tertiary Entrance Rank), NSW and ACT use UAI (University Admissions Index) and Queensland uses OP (Overall Position on a scale of 1-25). IB aggregate scores are equated to TERs on a translation agreed to by state universities.

The Tertiary Admissions Centres issue offers to successful applicants on behalf of the universities in January for first semester intake. Students only receive one offer – for the course listed highest in their preferences for which they have met the entry requirements.

International students wishing to apply to Australian universities should contact that university's International Programmes Office. These offices will facilitate the applications process as well as provide arrival services, temporary accommodations, comprehensive orientation programmes and academic preparation programmes. Ongoing support during enrolment will continue through this office.

North America

Canada

Canadian universities are a high quality, economical choice. The applications are usually due between January and March, but early application has several benefits including early responses.

Undergraduate programmes in the humanities, social sciences, physical and applied sciences are available at most universities in Canada. However, professional programmes such as medicine, dentistry, law, architecture, engineering and journalism may not be available in all provinces. Degrees conferred from Canadian universities include Bachelors, Masters and Doctorates.

Application Process: Canadian universities operate much like those in the US. Each university sets its own admission standards and assesses the qualifications of each applicant individually.

Applicants get evaluated based on their high school academic preparation, meaning their semester marks from grades 9-12, as well as SAT and SAT Subject Test scores in some cases. IB Diplomas are accepted in Canada, and although universities will look at predicted scores, they do not base their decisions solely on what is predicted. Application will need to be accompanied by detailed academic documents from ISH. When you have ascertained what documents are required you need to formally request them from the College Counsellor who will then forward them to the university in question.

The application process varies according to the province. Most application deadlines are in mid-February and the notifications for admission, wait-listing or denial usually arrive in April or May. It is advisable to check with each individual university regarding procedures and requirements either online or by contacting the admissions office directly. A large number of the universities in Ontario use the OUAC (Ontario University Application Centre) as a central application agency. Applications to other universities must be done directly through that university.

To apply to universities in Ontario, students need to go to the OUAC website, www.ouac.on.ca and register on-line. The registration is by university and by degree

course sought. This process takes about 5-10 minutes as it is a basic registration. The university will then notify you of any special application forms and essays that need to be done for your specific degree course. The ISH Counsellor will send copies of your references and transcripts once you have received your student ID number from each university and requested that this information is sent.

To apply to universities in British Columbia or other provinces, you must apply directly to each university just as you would for the US. The websites for UBC and University of Victoria are www.ubc.ca and www.uvic.ca.

Students who apply to Quebec universities also apply directly to each university. McGill's application procedures and admissions requirements are different than those in other provinces so students need to check their website which is www.mcgill.ca.

Information and Resources: If you would like more information about Canadian universities and the admissions process, MacLean's magazine usually does a review of Canadian universities in October and is a useful place to find details about the different institutions.

The Association of Universities and Colleges in Canada (AUCC) (151 Slater Street, Ottawa, Ontario, Ontario K1P 5N1) is another good source of information. Also at: www.aucc.ca. Another source is the Real Guide to Canadian Universities by Sara Borins.

Important Notes: Students applying to Canada with the IB Diploma are not normally required to take the SAT exam. However they are recommended to take the exam and, if the scores are good send them to the universities. Students applying to Canada without the full IB diploma MUST take the SAT exam. The Canadian universities normally don't accept the ACT. All applicants who are not native English speakers MUST take the TOEFL exam, or another English language proficiency test as outlined by the university.

Some useful websites for investigating higher education in Canada:

<http://www.studyincanada.com/english/index.htm>

A comprehensive source of information about studying and living in Canada. Available in English, French, Spanish, and Arabic.

http://www.aucc.ca/index_e.html. An excellent website containing comprehensive information about all Canada's universities.

www.macleans.ca – this is a magazine that also contains good sections about university education.

Information on studying in Canada and scholarships – www.cbie.ca (Canadian Bureau for International Education).

www.canlearn.ca is a comprehensive Canadian government website with numerous links to other useful sites where most issues relating to studying in Canada are covered.

USA

With regard to the USA, the words college and university are used interchangeably when referring to institutions of higher education. To be precise, the word “college” usually refers to an institution devoted primarily to undergraduate education. You are an undergraduate until you graduate with your college degree (called a bachelor's degree). A “university,” on the other hand, is usually a larger institution offering a combination of undergraduate and graduate (master's and/or doctorate) degrees. Universities frequently have a large commitment to research as well as teaching. As the focus of this booklet is undergraduate study both college and university will be used.

The main subject you study for your degree is known as your “major”. If you are not sure which major to choose, it may not be a problem. The majority of students who begin college in the US do not know what their major will be. There is latitude to try different courses and then choose one. Many students apply as an “undecided” student and wait until their second year in college to declare a major. Except for certain majors – like engineering and science – nearly all students take a variety of courses during this time.

Applications

In the US, colleges and universities each set their own criteria for admission. Many colleges use the Common Application (www.commonapp.org), but many others still have their own application form, which asks different questions, have a variety of deadlines, and set their own policies. This can become rather complicated as you attempt to keep track of what each college wants from you. Check the deadlines carefully. Most applications should be complete and posted prior to the December/Christmas holiday

break. Therefore, to make sure that all documentation is processed properly you should ensure to submit it to the College Counsellor by December 1st. This will also help to ensure that students concentrate properly on their Semester 1 exams.

There is a more comprehensive section dealing with US applications later in this guide.

Europe

There are many countries and, therefore, universities and other educational establishments available throughout Europe. For general information the following websites can be consulted: www.study-in-europe.org, <http://www.eua.be/>, <http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/>.

Conditions for studying in the EU

Students who are a resident of an EU country can attend a university in any other EU country for the same price as a student who lives in that country if they:

- Meet all entrance requirements of the university;
- Pass a proficiency test in the language classes are taught in;
- Have lived in the country where they have citizenship for 3 years prior to age 18;
- Usually need to have the full IB diploma.

Germany

In Germany, public universities usually expect applications to be completed after your final year is completed in June and final school documents are available. Make sure you know what documentation will be needed prior to ISH's closing for the summer. You will need your *Hochschulzugangsberechtigung* from the Regionalschulamt Hamburg. (NOTE: in the appendices at the end of this guide there is a detailed description of the process involved in converting the IB into an Abitur for entry into German universities).

Some of the conditions about the acceptance of the IB in Germany are listed below:

- All IB Diploma candidates must have completed 12 successive years of full-time education and all subjects must have been studied continuously throughout the two-year IB Diploma course (no switching courses).
- The IB Diploma must include six subjects with minimum grades of 4. When a candidate has only 3 points in one subject, compensation is possible with 5 points

in another subject at the same level, with a minimum overall score of 24 points.
All academic subjects must be tested in the same examination session.

Conditions for Non-Germans

Students must take the following subjects at the appropriate levels.

- Language A1 (mother-tongue course) at Higher or Standard Level
- Language A2/B (foreign language course) at Higher or Standard Level
- Mathematics **or** a Natural Science (Biology, Physics, Chemistry) to be taken at Higher Level.
- Mathematics Higher Level or Mathematics Standard Level. The Mathematical Studies course is **not** recognized.

Conditions for Germans

The same conditions apply for Germans as for Non-Germans except that they must be able to show they have studied **two** foreign languages in addition to their mother tongue (Language A) for a minimum of four consecutive years. One must be studied as Language A2 or Language B in their IB Diploma programme.

WEB RESOURCES

www.studienwahl.de Excellent site full of information about which subjects are offered at which German universities. Indispensable for students wishing to study in Germany.

www.arbeitsagentur.de describes hundreds of careers available in Germany, and details what type of education will qualify you for those careers.

www.planet-beruf.de contains a number of tools to use in exploring your interests and how they match up with available careers and educational paths in Germany.

Students who are interested in doing a career assessment search in German can go to www.geva-institut.de. The search is in German.

To learn more about German universities and the courses they offer go to: <http://www.hochschulkompass.de/> or www.daad.de

Netherlands

The Netherlands is an increasing popular university destination for students from many countries. It offers top quality courses, taught in English at some of the oldest universities in Europe.

Information on the Dutch uniform university application can be found at www.nuffic.nl. This is the Netherlands organisation for international co-operation in higher education. The website <http://www.studienscout-nl.de/> contains a huge number of resources pertaining to higher education in the Netherlands.

The following is a list of some of the top universities in the Netherlands. Many of these are many centuries old and have well established educational and research programmes.

Delft University of Technology;	Dutch Open University;
Eindhoven University of Technology;	Erasmus University Rotterdam;
Leiden University;	Maastricht University;
Radboud University Nijmegen;	Tilburg University;
University of Amsterdam;	University of Groningen;
University of Twente;	Utrecht University;
VU University Amsterdam;	Wageningen Univ. and Research Centre.

Switzerland

Switzerland, is a popular destination for students who wish to get an academic training in hospitality. Tourism and hospitality are huge worldwide industries so students would be entering an exciting and fast-changing profession. There are also many other study options available, for example, economics, law, engineering, architecture and theology.

There are 10 cantonal universities and 2 federal institutes of technology. There are also 9 universities of applied sciences accredited by the federal government.

The following websites contain information to help a student researching higher education in Switzerland. <http://www.swissuniversity.ch/system-swiss-education.htm>
<http://www.crus.ch/information-programme/recognition-swiss-enic.html?L=2>
<http://www.crus.ch/information-programme/study-in-switzerland.html?L=2>.

There are also several well established hotel management schools/centres that provide Bachelor and Master Degree programmes. At present Switzerland's 12 leading hotel

management schools, teach their programmes in French, German, and/or English (8 teach their programmes in English). For more information go to info@aseh.ch. A list of them is contained in the appendix at the end of this handbook.

Italy

Italy is a country with a rich tradition in matters of education and scholarly pursuits that dates back millennia. It has a limited number of courses available through English and the following websites might be useful in any research. www.study-in-italy.it, <http://www.sssup.it/>, <http://www.italian-design-academy.com/en/index.php>, http://www.unibocconi.eu/wps/wcm/connect/SitoPubblico_EN/Navigation+Tree/Home

United Kingdom

The UK has a wide range of universities many of which have long and distinguished histories as seats of learning. The UK University advisor has individual catalogues or “prospectuses,” from several UK universities. These are also found in the library. The catalogues contain specific information on the courses offered at each university. Many have minimum entry requirements regarding subjects taken in the IB and number of IB points that may be needed before an offer is made.

You are required to indicate your course of study at the time that you apply and your acceptance is for that particular course within the university. If you decide to change your course of study after the first year, you must reapply. This is very different from the US where, since most first year students are required to take a broad variety of courses, changing a major is easy. In addition, when applying to the UK, you use one application for six universities (UCAS form).

For more information go to www.ucas.com. UCAS applications are due on 15th January except Oxford and Cambridge which are due on 15th October.

All UK application material should be provided to the UK Advisor (Mr. Martin) prior to the Christmas holiday break.

UCAS Offers

Each time a UK University makes a decision on one of your applications, UCAS will send you a formal decision letter with the details of your offer. You do not need to deal with any of these letters until you get your last one. Included with the last decision letter will be a form you will use to notify UCAS of which university you want to attend.

You will be asked to code all of your offers (you could have as many as six) as “Firm,” “Insurance,” or “Decline.” At this time, you must choose one firm and one insurance offer, and all others must be declined. Since most offers are conditional upon you getting certain examination scores and you will not yet have received the results of your exams, this can be a difficult decision. If you are confused about any of your offers, check before you complete your reply form. Once you fill out the reply slip, you have made a commitment to particular courses and cannot change your mind.

If you have questions about which are the right offers to hold, see the UK College Counsellor for advice. UCAS asks that you reply promptly after receiving your reply slip. In fact, you have until early May to make your decisions.

US Style Universities in Europe, the Middle East and Asia (American Colleges Overseas)

There are an increasing number of quality post secondary institutions in Europe where instruction is in English and that have more US style programmes. Many of these colleges are associated with institutions in their host country and/or the US. They are located in all major European cities, e.g. Rome, Paris, Madrid, Barcelona, London, etc.

For many students of international schools these institutions allow for a smooth transition from an international school with an English curriculum to an international university with an English curriculum. It is also possible to attend one of these universities for a year or two and then transfer to another institution in the United States. Although the tuition can be high, substantial scholarships are available. Application procedures are generally similar to those in the USA. To find more information on these universities go to: www.cois.org/aco

Asia

Japan

Japanese universities applications are usually due from October until January for entry in March/April. There are also some universities with April deadlines for a September starting date. The deadline usually coincides with the entrance examination dates.

Traditional Japanese Universities:

ISH students who are Japanese citizens are ordinarily classified as *kikokushijo* or “returning students.” Students generally must travel to Japan to take their university examinations usually during the months of October, November, or December.

<http://www.yamasa.org/access/index.html> is maintained by a Japanese university to provide entrance information for international students interested in post secondary admission.

Courses in English:

Two Japanese universities have recently started offering courses in English. Ritsumeikan University and Doshisha University which are both located in Kyoto.

Doshisha University is the sister university of Amherst College in the USA, and is located just north of the Imperial Palace in Kyoto. Its approach to Liberal Arts education is similar to Amherst's. The university has established a new institute and offers three majors, in Social Science, Business and Global Studies. Students are admitted in either April or September. Fees for studying at Doshisha can be up to 50% lower than equivalent programmes at US institutions. Scholarships are available. Living expenses in Kyoto are approximately 1,200 USD per month. Students are permitted to work part time in Japan.

This email address: ji-iiie@mail.doshisha.ac.jp is the email address for the office that manages students entering into the B.A. Programme.

Others

If you are interested in learning about universities in other parts of the world, you should contact the universities directly. The College Counsellor can also assist you. In the past year student applications and enquiries involved investigation into the university application procedures in Korea, Hong Kong and the Republic of Ireland.

Gap Year

If you believe that you are not ready to begin college immediately after finishing school, staying away for a year gives you some time to think over your future choices. For some students taking a year to consider their next step is an excellent choice; for some others it becomes obvious very quickly that they have made the wrong decision. It is a decision that requires careful thought.

You can apply for college as normal in 12th Grade and then request a deferral from the university (usually up to 1st of May) or you can make your application in the Autumn following graduation when you have had the opportunity to reflect on your education to date and thus make a more mature decision. Remember to inform the College Counsellor of your decision and to ensure that all documentation (e.g. final transcript and IB scores) is sent on time.

If you are planning to take time to consider your choices then it is advisable that you find some meaningful activity to occupy your time, e.g. an internship, volunteer work, a job.

www.gapyear.com is a good source of information about different activities you may choose to engage in during your time before continuing your formal education.

A popular site for volunteer activities is www.earthwatch.org.

3. How to Choose Colleges

Deciding where you should apply to is complicated. You should be trying to find a college that you will get a good qualification from but where you will also be happy and be able to enjoy different activities.

There are many criteria under which one can evaluate whether a university is right for you. Students are recommended to evaluate all potential universities under criteria such as (taken from the International Student Handbook – a College Board Publication):

- size: coming from a relatively small school like ISH the adjustment to a university campus with 30 or 40,000 students may prove to be overwhelming;
- location and surroundings: similarly, changing from Hamburg with its 1.5m plus residents to a semi-rural town of 15 to 20,000 residents may be too much of a culture shock. You should think about the following: geographical location, weather/climate, proximity to home, friends and airports, size of town/city;
- Curriculum and academic environment – competitiveness of entry, degree level(s), lecturer/professor – student ratio, emphasis on teaching or research;
- type of institution - public or private, religious or secular, traditional or progressive;
- enrolment - what proportion are international, size of student population, male-female ratio, retention rates(i.e. do students complete their studies);
- campus life - provision of housing - mixed or single-sex, weekend activities, clubs and societies, religious organisations, security;
- activities/ sports – sport, music, entertainment, debating;
- entrance requirements - IB points, tests (SAT, ACT etc.), specific course requirements (e.g. higher Maths for engineering courses), deadlines;
- costs, and financial aid possibilities - cost of tuition, accommodation, books, travel back home, availability of financial aid;

Some colleges have minimum entry requirements that you need to meet, e.g., to study Medicine you may need to have Biology and Chemistry, for Engineering you may need Higher Mathematics, and students need to make sure that they will be considered for the course they are applying for. *Taking Mathematical Studies can prevent you from gaining entry to universities in certain countries.*

A Bachelor's Degree in most subjects does not make you an expert or a professional in that field. In other words it is not training for specific employment. A good university education should give you many skills that future employers will be looking for. Your knowledge will have broadened and your critical reasoning skills should be better after 3-4 years of higher education. Employers are interested in the ability and potential of graduates and will usually provide specific job related training to new recruits.

Using the list above is only a guide - you have to decide what importance to give each area. You should also use handbooks, catalogues, magazines and brochures. You should speak to current students, graduates (alumni), and college representatives if possible. The best way to make an informed decision is to consider all of the above and then, if possible, pay a visit to the college.

4. About you

Part of the process of choosing the right course, career or college is asking yourself some questions. You need to be able to recognise your own personal characteristics and try to discover if there are certain types of environment that are best for you or are there college types that you are not suited to.

These questions may also be of benefit as you write college application essays or prepare for college interviews. (The order is random).

- What kind of student am I?
- Am I a group worker or more of an individual?
- Do I always challenge myself as hard as possible?
- How do I deal with setbacks?
- How well prepared am I for the independence of college life?
- What words would others (family, friends and teachers) use to describe me?
- Do I realise my strongest points? Do I have weaknesses?
- What talents do I have? Do I use them?
- Do I enjoy learning? Do I read for pleasure?
- Do I discuss ideas with others?
- What kind of people do I admire?
- Do I have a life away from my studies?
- What annoys me? What upsets me?
- What make me unique?

- Do I know what I want (and don't want)? Do I know how to get it?
- What makes me happy?

- Am I confident that studying abroad will suit my temperament?
- Do I have the language skills to study in that country?

- How do I learn best? What methods of teaching and style of teaching most appeal to me? What types of classes appeal to me – am I a “*lab worker*”, a language enthusiast, a reader, do I like discussing, debating, arguing?
- What extra activities appealed to me – MUN, CAS, etc.
- What have been the most stimulating and challenging intellectual experiences of my time in school?
- What interests do I pursue outside school?

- What are my expectations of myself? What are my family’s expectations of me?

5. College applications to the USA

In this section there is a general overview of the applications process specifically as it pertains to the USA.

How decisions are made

Typically there are five major components to an application:

1. The **transcript**, i.e. the record of your school achievement – along with the school profile the university will be able to assess the level of difficulty of our academic programme. The reverse side of the transcript contains the student's Honours, Awards and Activities from grades 9-12;
2. Standardised **testing** – SAT, ACT and/or TOEFL;
3. The application **essay**;
4. **Letters** of recommendation (from College Counsellor and/teacher(s));
5. Extra-curricular **activities** and personal **attributes**.

Some institutions take further factors into account:

1. Personal interview;
2. Legacy affiliation with the institution (i.e. family history of attendance and /or donations made);
3. Athletic or artistic ability or other special talents;
4. Financial need.

Below is a list of the most common factors colleges will use when determining who to accept:

- Level of difficulty of educational programme – the ISH diploma meets the criteria of all universities worldwide;
- Evidence of academic consistency or improvement over time;
- Test results – SAT, ACT etc.;
- Teachers' recommendations;
- Extracurricular activities, awards, community involvement;
- Personal essay;

- Interview;

In one survey (conducted by College Board in 2006) 1,946 four-year colleges rated six factors as “very important or important”. The percentages are based on the number of institutions identifying the factor as a priority:

- School achievement 89%
- Test Scores 85%
- Recommendations 48%
- Essay 43%
- Interview 31%
- Activities 30%

What colleges look for in an applicant can be summarised as follows:

- Proven Academic Achievement: this is the most significant factor in the college admission decision and this information is contained in your *transcript*. Colleges are looking for strong grades in academically challenging subjects. Colleges can judge how rigorous a school’s programme is by examining the school’s profile.
- Standardised Test Scores: standardised scores allow colleges to compare students from different schools. Each college has its own policy about how much weight it places on testing. The more selective colleges are said to place a lot of importance on test scores.
- Extracurricular activities/work experience: quality is more important than quantity here. Admissions officers are looking for evidence of endurance, perseverance and determination. Constant changing of activities also has many possible negative connotations. You want to show that you have used your time, energy and commitment to pursuing activities in depth.
- Essays: this is an area that is totally within the control of the applicant. In some cases you can even choose the title or subject. It is an opportunity to display writing talent that brings forth who you are, what you value and what your goals are. The essay should be original, creative and easy to read. Applications officers read thousands of them and want new approaches.

- Interviews: some colleges require them, and you can often do them in Hamburg. They can provide you with an opportunity to convey parts of your personality that paper would never show.
- School Recommendations: This is written by the College Counsellor. It is a part of every application and thus, the counsellor must see a strong personality who meets deadlines, is organised, has a strong academic and extra-curricular record and acts responsibly and with integrity during the application process.
- Teacher Recommendations: applicants usually need at least one recommendation from a teacher. You should choose one of your IB teachers who knows you and will be able to write positive things about your academic performance and your personality.
- Special Talents: outstanding sports performers, actors, writers, artists or musicians can gain entry as colleges like to have diversity and creativity on campus.
- Sometime you can include an outside recommendation from your non-school activities.

The application can show a lot about the applicant. If it is untidy, incomplete, slovenly, contains errors etc. then your chances of gaining entry are reduced.

The Admissions Process: Checklist

- When are applications due?
- Does the college accept the Common Application? If so, does it require supplemental forms?
- What does the application contain? Are essays required? What documents must I supply from ISH?
- Is an interview suggested or required? Is an interview available from staff or alumni?
- When may you visit the college? What is its policy regarding campus visits?
- What are the financial aid deadlines? What financial aid forms are required?

General Types of Colleges/Universities (USA)

Colleges can broadly be divided into either liberal arts or comprehensive universities. A comprehensive university is usually fairly large and consists of different departments called “colleges” of which one may be a “College of Liberal Arts.” Most comprehensive universities have undergraduate programmes, which you are in until you earn your first degree (called a Bachelor’s degree), and graduate programmes, which are professional training programmes in such areas as law and medicine.

Liberal arts colleges provide students with a breadth of knowledge in all areas rather than training for one particular job. Most majors at liberal arts colleges are of a more general nature (English, biology, psychology) rather than vocational (accounting, nursing, business, engineering), and help students become better thinkers, writers, and problem solvers - skills that help students find jobs in many different fields.

Students at a liberal arts college still specialize and graduate with a major. Their degree indicates that in addition to a general core of knowledge, they also have specialized knowledge in a particular field. Students who know they will be going on to graduate programmes (law, medicine, business administration, counselling), often find liberal arts colleges to be good preparation. These degrees are good preparation for the entrance examinations to graduate programmes in fields such as law or medicine or others.

Campus culture

Each college has a different “culture” or feel. US colleges are often categorised under a variety of headings so that they might feature in lists and rankings according to certain criteria. Some examples of this include:

- politically conservative or liberal?
- sports campuses or party ones?
- openness towards minorities – e.g. colour, religion, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation?
- religious affiliation
- cosmopolitan/international dimension

- introverts or extroverts
- artists, musicians, technology enthusiasts.

Steven Antonoff's book *The College Finder (Choosing the School that's Right for you)* is full of such lists.

Comparisons and Rankings

There is an industry that subsists on the computation and dissemination of college rankings. As with all statistical formulations one should try to find out what the basis for the rankings is. There are many critics of ranking tables and parents and students should be careful before forming opinions based on rankings about the relative quality of a university or its education. For a student at the research stage of their application process they should be focussing on finding a college where they will grow and develop, meet new people and find challenges suitable to their own level.

Application Plans and Types

Students are encouraged to apply on-line. Go to the web site of each university where you plan to apply and set up an account. It is important that you keep a record of your *login* names and *pin* numbers for each university. You will be able to begin the application process, save the information and then return to work on it.

Although your part of the application may be completed on-line you will still need to print all school and recommendation forms. You should ask your teachers (1 or 2) for recommendations well in advance of deadlines. When recommendations are completed the teacher should give them to the counsellor. The counsellor will fill out the school report, add your official transcript and include a school profile. All material will then be sent in one package by registered mail.

Note: if you have spent any grade between 9 and 12 at a school other than ISH, you will need to order school records (transcripts, profiles) from previous schools as soon as possible and have them sent to the universities of your choice.

Common Application

The Common Application is an admission application—online and in print—that students may submit to numerous institutions. It is used by over 350 colleges many of which have additional requirements. Most of the best known and most selective universities use this process. You can access the Common Application at www.commonapp.org.

Regular Decision

Most students complete what is called a “Regular Decision” application. This application often has a deadline postmarked in January and a standard date, usually around April 1, when you will be notified of your acceptance.

Some universities, primarily large state universities, don’t admit their freshmen (first year undergraduates) all at once. Instead they make admission decisions as the applications are submitted. Therefore, if you apply in October, you might hear in November. Admission

officers keep accepting and rejecting students until the freshman class is filled. This “rolling admissions” plan means that the longer you wait before applying, the harder it will be to get admitted.

Applications for large state universities are usually relatively brief since they have thousands of applications to process. The smaller and/or more prestigious colleges usually have longer application and will take more factors into account when selecting.

Early Decision

Early Decision is an application programme under which you indicate that a specific college is your absolute first choice. The deadline for Early Decision may be as early as November 1 or as late as November 30. While you are waiting for your decision it is advised that you prepare applications for other universities.

Under Early Decision you are usually notified of your acceptance around December 15. The important thing to remember about an Early Decision application is that if you are accepted, you must withdraw applications to all other colleges and agree to attend the Early Decision college. You should only use the Early Decision plan if you have an absolute first choice college. An early decision application is like a contract you make with a college. If they discover that you have not withdrawn other applications your early decision acceptance can be revoked.

There are both advantages and disadvantages to the Early Decision programme. One of the major advantages is that admission committees feel positive about a student who has clearly designated their college as the first choice. Because of this, at most colleges, students who apply for Early Decision have a slightly better chance of admission than those that apply under the regular decision programme.

If you are not accepted, you will either be rejected or deferred. If it seems clear that you will not “make the cut” in April, you will be notified in December that you have been denied. Those students who still have a chance of being admitted are usually deferred. Deferred students are reconsidered in the spring with the regular decision applicants.

The major disadvantage to the Early Decision programme is that you will have less time to review all your options and will have to commit to a college very early in your 12th grade year.

Early Action

Early Action (or Early Notification) is a term which colleges use differently. Generally, these programmes allow you to apply early and receive an early notification, but they do not require you to withdraw your other applications. Applications are usually due on November 1 and notification is done in mid-December. But accepted students don't have to decide which offer to accept until the regular May 1 reply date. Unless you are a competitive applicant, you should probably use the regular rather than the early decision action application at universities which are highly selective.

The Forms (and other requirements)

For US applications many forms are required. Some are supplied by the student applicant, but many have to be sent from the school. It is vital that this work is done well in advance of the deadlines. You should always have your documents checked by someone you trust and you should always keep at least one copy of everything you send. Here follows some information about applications that may be of help.

Application Essay

While specific directions will vary from college to college, all will be asking you to “tell us about yourself” in a well-written essay. It is becoming more common for colleges to devise creative titles for essays that require broad mental dexterity to address. With your essay, you want to prove two things: that you are a good writer and that you are an interesting person. A well-written essay can help to tip the scales in your favour.

“Can I use the same essay for several different applications?” you ask. Of course, although you have to be certain the essay fits the question. Take care to edit essays so that the name of another college is not left in accidentally.

Topics to Avoid

You should probably avoid some topics. Some are simply bad topics that are inappropriate for college applications. Others are extremely popular and have been written and read thousands of times before. You are better off avoiding the following:

- Your political views.
- Your religious beliefs, unless you are applying to a college with a strong religious orientation.
- The evils of drugs. Such essays tend to sound contrived.
- Any topic that draws attention to your academic weaknesses.
- Your SAT scores. Never mention your scores no matter how good or bad they are.
- Anything that will reveal that you are a poor college prospect, such as how you hate to study.

- Big or general ideas about how you will help the world live together in peace and harmony. Stick with details.
- Trendy topics that are in the news.
- Anything that makes it sound like you are going to college for the sole purpose of learning how to make money.
- Any topic specifically mentioned as a great essay topic in one of those how-to-get-into-college books. Several thousand other students will have read the same book and will write on the same topic.

Keep It Brief

The admission staff will have huge numbers of applications to read and will only spend a few minutes reading each essay. (You are right, that does not seem fair after all of the hours you put into writing it.) Your essay should never be longer than requested, be in normal 10 or 12-point font, and look pleasing to the eye. Single spaced text with a double space between paragraphs usually looks best. If there are no guidelines on length, it should be one to two pages.

Admissions officers report that short essays are often more revealing than longer ones. Applicants often edit or proof-read them less carefully and therefore, they can end up creating a negative impression of the student.

Avoid Generalities

Admission officers have to read an enormous number of essays. Many are the same and are not particularly memorable. It is easier to write a good essay if you write about particulars rather than generalities. If you are asked to write about your extracurricular activities, narrow your focus. Write about something that happened to you in a particular activity. The detail sticks in a reader's mind.

You can use the ordinary experiences that have occurred in your life and make them significant. What have you done with your experiences? Have they changed your life? Why was an experience special to you, and what have you learned from it? How is it relevant to your personal development or to your college and career plans?

In your life, you surely have had some failures. Colleges would be interested in how you handled the failure. Did you complain? Blame the teacher? Was it a learning experience or impetus to change? When you are explaining what you learned do not just say, “I learned a lot.” Be specific and tell exactly what you learned. Show the college that you have learned and grown from your experiences---like you plan to do in college.

Writing Style

You want to get your ideas across, not bury them in words. Your prose should be clear and direct. Do not use a thesaurus to force in big, impressive words. Doing this is always obvious and never impressive. As you reread your essay, stop at every adjective or adverb and ask yourself if it is necessary. Too many adjectives and adverbs make writing seem contrived. Concentrate on nouns and verbs.

Admissions officers take it for granted that you will get help with your essays. Ask someone who writes well to read your essay and comment on it. Warning: if the essay is not your own original work it will probably be noticed.

Short Answer Questions

In addition to the major essay, many applications ask you to respond to several other questions in a paragraph or two. A popular question is to ask you to write about which extra curricular activity was the most meaningful to you. Be specific even if the question seems to ask for a general response. The typical answer students give when asked to indicate why they want to attend a particular college is “To obtain a good education.” Give an interesting response! Write about something you learned when you talked to the college’s representative or visited the campus. The less general and vague your answer is and the more you actually mean it, the more interesting it will be.

While they are not full essays, you should make certain all your answers are well written. If you have written an outstanding essay, but your short answer questions are poorly written, the admission officer may rightly wonder whether the essay was actually your own work.

The “Anything Else” Question

Sometimes there will be an optional section at the end of the application asking if there is anything else you wish to add. Use this, if, after looking at the entire application, you

think there is something absent which should be added. Look at the completed application and determine whether it accurately and positively reflects who you are. If you find something has not been included somewhere else, this is where it could go.

There are innumerable websites, books and other resources that can help with essays. Consult them but do not spend too much time on them. Don't become overly distracted by the overload of advice and opinion. Start an essay and then get someone to read it and then make the changes that are required. Set a deadline and keep to it.

In conclusion, essays must broadcast the voice of the writer. An authentic essay will be easily noticed and will make a strong impression.

Teacher Recommendations

Most colleges require one teacher recommendation, but many will accept two. You should approach teachers well in advance of your application deadline and politely request that they write a recommendation for you. You should choose one of your IB subject teachers (preferably a higher level subject) that will be able to give a strong recommendation about your academic skills and personal strengths.

You should pick teachers who know you, respect you, and will make positive comments about you. If possible you should provide a CV/resume to the teacher so that they will be able to include information about your non-school activities. A resume can help you to highlight your strengths and let the teachers know of particular accomplishments or involvement inside and outside school. Remember, teachers are busy and should to be given plenty of notice.

Recommendations are confidential.

Counsellor Recommendations

Applications usually require a counsellor recommendation. For example, the Common Application has a section called the “Secondary School Report”. As part of this a “Counsellor’s Report” must be added. This form usually asks for an assessment of applicants’ motivation, academic promise, and integrity. The Counsellor will need to see these and other characteristics in his dealings with students as they pursue their applications.

International Applicants

Applying from outside the USA can give a student an advantage. Most colleges have a percentage of their incoming class set aside for international students. They also actively seek students from a diverse geographical and cultural range. Students from international school are very attractive applicants and therefore, ISH applicants have strong credentials as potential students in many universities. ISH Students with US passports are still considered as international applicants. Within each state in the USA student fees are different for in-state and out-of-state students. Information regarding this can be obtained

by consulting <http://www.finaid.org/otheraid/stateresidency.phtml> or <http://www.collegegold.com/applydecide/staterequirements>.

Financial Statement Required for a US Visa

If you have a US passport and are applying to a US college, you do not need to submit a financial statement (even if you mistakenly receive a form asking you for one). If, however, you are not a US citizen, you will be required to obtain a visa from the US Department of Immigration before you travel to the US to attend college. To be eligible for a visa, you must demonstrate that you have sufficient funds available to pay for your education and living costs while you are in the US. Therefore, you will have to submit a “financial statement” listing the names of the persons (probably your parents) who will be paying for your education. You will also have to provide a statement from their bank certifying that funds are available.

Since many bank officials are naturally wary of signing a form, they may not want to certify the form provided by the college. In that case, ask for sufficient official copies of a financial statement of account or a letter (written in English) indicating your parents have sufficient funds available to support your college expenses, and attach it to the form provided by the college.

Sending Your Application

When you have decided the universities that you plan to apply to fill out a “**Request to Process an Application**” form for each college/university you plan to apply to. It is important that you write clearly the name and address of the university admission office. Read the form completely and check all material that needs to be included. Return this form to the counsellor as soon as it is ready.

Once the required recommendations, an official transcript, and a school profile are added, the entire application packet will be sent together in one envelope. ISH will pay the regular, registered airmail postage for the first six applications. If you need to send out your application packet by express mail, you may be responsible for that cost.

Applications, which are due during, or immediately after the ISH winter holiday (i.e. January), should be ready and brought to the college counsellor's office by **December 1st**.

Extracurricular Activities

Extra-curricular activities are important for all students as they provide a break from academic pressures but they also enable other non-academic talents to grow and flourish. Admissions officers are looking for long-term sustained dedication to activities that both enjoyable and developmental. It is not necessary to try to mention your entire range of out-of-school activities on your application, nor is it important to fill up every space. Concentrate on those that were important to you and leave out the ones that were not. Activities you joined and then quickly quit should probably be left out too. You should list your activities in the order of importance to you. What colleges want to see is that you are willing to try different activities and that you continue to pursue them – they don't want to see that you continuously start activities and change your mind within a few weeks or months. Evidence of commitment and perseverance is what is being looked for.

Impressive Activities, Abilities and Awards

Some extracurricular activities are seen as being more important than others. Here are some of the more impressive ones:

- Music or drama; especially if you have had a leading role;
- Varsity sports;
- Yearbook editor or committee;
- Math and science awards;
- Leadership positions with substantial time commitment either in or out of school (church, etc.), or community service activities;
- Student government, especially if you are class representative or higher;
- Languages you speak;
- Hobbies;
- Service activities;
- Anything unusual that took a significant amount of time and effort.

Do not use MUN, NECIS, or CAS or other acronyms which are unfamiliar to people outside ISH. Describe what it is, for example, Model United Nations (MUN).

Employment and Summer Activities

In listing jobs, try to make them sound interesting. If an explanation is required provide it. Do not forget to include such things as tutoring, baby-sitting, or CAS activities. As with extra curricular activities, evidence of commitment and perseverance is what is being looked for. Summer schools can go in this section. If you attended a college summer programme, you will probably be asked to submit your transcripts. If you have a copy bring it to the counsellor so a copy can be put in your file and sent with your application.

Financial Assistance and Scholarships

College expenses represent a major expenditure. Families who lack the financial means to pay for post-secondary education are encouraged to apply for assistance from the individual colleges as well as federal and local sources. It is important to understand both the types of funding available as well as the process for applying for that funding. College financial aid offices are an excellent source of information, and since the process and deadlines can be different at each university, it is essential that you and family work with each individual one to determine what information is required and when it is due. Scholarships and grants do not have to be repaid.

*It is important to note: students and their parents are strongly discouraged from paying for scholarship search services. These services are known to provide very little of merit at very high prices.

Financial Aid and Scholarships

For US citizens or permanent residents/Green Card holders attending college in the US, financial aid is generally only available if you demonstrate “financial need” as determined by a federal formula. Need-based financial aid in the form of grants, low-interest loans, and federal work-study programmes is available to qualified students on the basis of the information submitted on the “Free Application for Federal Student Aid” - the **FAFSA** form. Typically, a financial aid offer consists of a combination of these three types of funding. You are permitted to accept some, none, or all forms of financial assistance offered.

On the FAFSA form your parents will list information about assets, income, and other data from their US income tax forms. This information will be subjected to a formula from which a determination will be made about the amount your family can reasonably be expected to contribute toward your education. The difference between your family’s contribution and the total college costs will be your financial need. If the results from this form show there is financial need, the college will probably offer you a loan, grant, work-study programme, or more likely, a combination of the three.

To apply for need-based financial aid you and your parents must complete the FAFSA after January 1 of your 12th grade year. Since the data you supplied on the form comes from your family's US income tax return from the previous year, the earliest you can complete the form is January 1. Shortly after January 1, your parents must calculate - but they do not need to send in - their US income taxes. The FAFSA form can either be completed online or by completing a paper form.

In reality very few ISH families qualify for need-based financial aid. However, if you think you have an "unusual circumstance" which should be considered, you should discuss it directly with the financial aid office of the college.

By Ivy League agreement, the most selective colleges only provide need, as opposed to merit-based, financial aid. Less selective colleges do, however, sometimes provide merit awards. These awards are used to encourage talented students to consider attending these colleges. Colleges realize that talented students will have a number of acceptance offers and use merit awards as an incentive to attract them. Talent grants are given to students who demonstrate a particular talent in sports, the arts, leadership, social service, or academic areas. These grants are offered regardless of a student's financial need and are sometimes open to non-US citizens.

Financial aid for non-US citizens

It is a fact that very few colleges in the world offer financial aid to students who are not citizens of that country. International students should plan on finding their own sources of money to pay for their college education, and thus the cost of a particular college may become a large factor in your choice. In most countries you will not be granted a visa unless you can prove you have sufficient financial resources to pay for your college, living expenses, and a return trip to your home country. Only a small percentage of colleges offer financial aid for international students. If you are an international student and you must have aid, don't spend time applying to universities that don't offer it.

Check with each college you are considering to determine the financial aid policies and processes for international students. The International Education Financial Aid Centre (www.iefaf.org) also provides a wealth of information and a database of funding for which international students are eligible.

Need Blind Admission

While most colleges consider US citizens' admission separately from their need for financial aid (i.e., they are “need-blind”) others are “need aware.” Whether or not your need for aid will be considered during the admission process should be clearly stated in each university's literature. For non-US citizens, nearly all universities are need-aware. Some are quite direct in telling non-US citizens that if they can't pay their own way, they need not apply.

A college that guarantees to meet students' “full-need” agrees to provide sufficient financial aid to meet the need as determined by the FAFSA form. Other colleges may admit students without regard to their ability to pay, but may not provide sufficient financial aid to make it possible for them to attend.

Applying for Financial Assistance

Two important notes:

- It is important to contact each college or university you are considering to learn which financial aid applications are required and when they are due. Filing deadlines can be different at each school.
- Financial assistance is primarily based on parental income — it is therefore extremely important for parents to complete their income tax returns early in the new calendar year.

The most common financial aid applications you will file are:

- Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Filling out the FAFSA is required by ALL US colleges and universities in order for families to be considered for financial aid. The FAFSA is updated annually and can be accessed online on January 1st.

It is generally advisable to complete the FAFSA as soon after January 1st as possible. The FAFSA is used by the federal government to determine eligibility for such federal aid programmes as Pell Grants, federal student loans, and work-study. Colleges also use the information collected on the FAFSA to determine student eligibility for their own financial based awards. Upon completion and submission of your FAFSA, you will receive a Student Aid Report (SAR), by email or in the post.

In order to fill out the FAFSA application form, you need a Personal Identification Number (PIN). Keep your PIN handy, as you will need to use it throughout the financial aid application process to access your information. You should keep it confidential and not share it with anyone. Both students and parents must apply for a PIN.

You will also be asked to provide code numbers for all colleges to which you are applying. You can find codes on the FAFSA website. Be certain to list the appropriate code for the course to which you are applying, as some universities may have different codes for undergraduate and graduate programmes.

- CSS Profile Some colleges require the CSS Profile in addition to the FAFSA. The CSS Profile is an online-financial aid application. You should contact the financial aid office at *each* private institution to establish whether the CSS Profile is required for that college and complete the CSS Profile 4-6 weeks before a college's application deadline. For early decision candidates, the CSS Profile should be filed in September or October; for regular decision candidates, this should take place in November or December. To begin the online application, you first have to register to become a "Profile member".
- Institutional Applications Some colleges also require their own financial aid application form. Check with each college's financial aid office to find out if it requires a college specific financial aid form.

Other possible sources of aid.

Many workplaces, churches, social organizations and clubs offer scholarships.

Reviewing Your Financial Aid Package

After you are accepted for admission at a college and all financial aid applications are complete, you will receive an award letter. This letter will spell out in detail the amount and types of financial assistance you will receive if you attend that college. If you have questions about your award letter, contact the financial aid office at the college directly. Financial aid officers will be happy to help you and your parents interpret the award letter.

By mid-April, with your acceptances and award letters in hand, it is time to choose a college! Cost and financial aid can be an important or even determining factor for many families. Consider and compare your offers carefully, taking into account factors such as the amount of debt you and your parents may incur, travel and living expenses.

Decide what suits your needs among the financial aid packages that have been offered to you. Then, you will be able to make an informed decision about which institution is best for you to attend. Most colleges give students until May 1st to make a final decision.

Once you have made a definite decision you should formally notify the admissions office of the college you will attend, alert the financial aid office that you accept their aid award, and notify all other colleges from whom you received offers that you will be attending another institution.

Sources of Information

Financial Aid Information from the CIS 2005/2006 Higher Education Directory

<http://highered.cois.org/resources/financialaid.htm> includes information about aid for [US Colleges/Universities](#), [US Four-Year Degree Granting Outside the USA](#), [Canadian Universities](#), [UK Universities](#) and [all other Universities outside the US](#). This source also lists colleges/universities that have special aid for international students.

US Department of Education, Office of Post-Secondary Education (OPE)

<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/>

For U.S. citizens and eligible non-citizens, this is the definitive source for Federal loans and financial assistance programmes and includes the FAFSA (Free Application for Student Aid), used by many states and private aid programmes to award funds.

College Board Online Scholarship Search

<http://www.collegeboard.org/fundfinder/html/ssrchttop.html>

CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE is a centralized financial aid application service operated by the College Scholarship Service of the College Board, which is used by approximately 450 colleges, universities, and graduate/professional schools and by approximately 350 scholarship programme sponsors.

Students register for the service by completing the PROFILE registration form, which they can do online or by telephone. The cost is \$5 (U.S.) if done online and \$6 (U.S.) if done by telephone.

You can locate scholarships, loans, internships, and other financial aid programmes from non-college sources that match your education level, talents, and background.

Completing the PROFILE form and “Scholarship Search” will help you find potential scholarship opportunities from a database of 3,400 programmes.

It includes a helpful glossary of financial terms.

6. General Sources of Information about Universities and Careers

Personal Contacts

You probably have at least a few universities in mind as you begin to think about college. Tell your friends and family about where you are thinking of going. Someone might know somebody who went there and who might be able to advise you. They may be able to arrange that you can talk to a staff member there or that you can have a tour of the college.

Campus Visits

If possible, try to visit some college campuses. A visit is an excellent way to help you narrow your choices of colleges. While there you should try to meet a senior person in the relevant subject department and someone involved in admissions.

Visits are best made early in your college planning; at the end of your 10th or 11th grade year. If you will be near a college campus during the summer try to find time to visit it and, if possible, take a tour. Some private organisations arrange for groups of students to visit colleges.

Before visiting a campus you should prepare a set of questions and you should review and amend these after each visit. You should have a resume/CV that gives your contact information, your education history, your academic plans and some personal information, for example, your hobbies, interests, activities. Make it interesting.

There are also many possible ways of taking virtual tours and these are usually through the eyes of current students. Naturally there is no substitute for the on the ground tour but if you have no possibility of visiting then you need as many possible ways of making an informed judgement, for example, at www.unigo.com.

A list of possible questions to ask during a college visit is in the appendices.

Admission Office Representatives

Every year ISH hosts college representatives. Even if you are not particularly interested in the college, the more information you gather about different types of colleges, the

easier it will be for you to make a more manageable list of prospective colleges. You might even discover a college that really appeals to you.

Keep in mind that admission representatives are there to promote their college. Even so, talking with them provides an opportunity for you to learn about a college and to interact with a member of the admission staff.

Guides, Books, and Videos

The Secondary School library and the Counsellor's office contain a wealth of non-electronic information. College catalogues, as well as a few videos and DVDs, can be found on the library bookshelves.

College Fairs

Several large College Fairs are held annually in Europe. This is an opportunity to obtain information from a large number of institutions of higher education at one time. Some of the most popular include:

October – A college fair with universities represented from USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Europe is held annually in *Berlin* and *Munich*. Hamburg was added to this schedule in 2010.

October – A large fair is presented by Studiebeurs in *Utrecht*, the Netherlands. Universities from northern Europe, the UK, and around the world are present.

February – Einstieg holds a large college fair at the *Hamburg Messe*. Over 300 exhibitors representing universities, language studies, internships, and training possibilities present information about careers and educational opportunities. There are also careers fairs in April and June – check on the web.

March – The UK Advisor takes a group of 11th graders to a Convention of UK Universities. If you are thinking about studying in the UK don't miss this opportunity.

Additionally, many universities have Open Days, including German ones– the college counsellor posts the invitations on the college bulletin board (outside room 114) and in the newsletter. Be sure to stay informed.

APPENDIX I General Information

1. TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN ADMISSIONS

ACT	American College Test (USA).
AP	Advanced Placement (USA).
ASAT	Australian Scholastic Aptitude Test.
CAO	Central Applications Office (Republic of Ireland).
CEEB	College Entrance Examinations Board (College Board (USA)).
OSO	Overseas Students Office.
OUAC	Ontario Universities' Application Centre (Canada).
PSAT	Preliminary SAT.
NMSQT	National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test.
QTAC	Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (Australia).
SAT I	SAT Reasoning Test (Critical Reading, Writing, Mathematics)
SAT II	SAT Subject Tests
SATAC	South Australia Tertiary Admission Centre (Australia)
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language.
UCAC	Universities and Colleges Admissions Centre (NSW, Australia)
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UK)

2. Questions to ask college representatives – all countries

(This is just a random selection – source: *College Counseling Sourcebook* – College Board 2004)

How would you characterise the majority of students?
From what background are the majority of students?
Are there many international students?

What is distinctive about the education here? What is the educational philosophy of the college? Has it changed in recent years?
What are the most popular courses/majors?
What is the proportion of faculty to students?
Are students taught by professors of graduate students?
What are the opportunities for graduate study?
How would you characterise the academic pressure and workload?

Are there any major changes planned for the next 4-5 years that might affect my decision to study here?

Are students happy? Are they enthusiastic about their courses?

What is the college library like? What computer facilities exist?

How near is the local town/city? What is transport service like? What can I do there?

Is there a good balance of academics, social life and extra-curricular activities?
Is there a student government body?

What are the social or cultural highlights of the year?
Is there a college band? Is there a campus newspaper?

What clubs and societies are available for students?
What facilities does the student centre have?

Is there a gym/fitness centre?

Are there medical services for students? Doctor, nurse, counsellor?
Do you have career services?

What non-academic activities do students pursue for fun?
What are the dominant social groups on campus? Are there any problems between minority groups?

Is the campus safe? Is there a party culture?

APPENDIX II **(USA)**

1. Glossary

Accelerated Programmes: Some colleges may offer high school students the ability to apply for undergraduate and graduate degrees with one application. Extremely competitive, these programmes are most often offered in medicine.

American College Test Programme: For-profit organization that oversees and administers the ACT. Responsible for maintaining official ACT results; will send for a fee upon student request.

Bachelor of Arts: (B.A. or A.B.) Undergraduate liberal arts degree awarded by colleges and universities upon successful completion of a number of courses which meet certain requirements; this option is available in areas such as physics, music, history, economics, and English.

Bachelor of Business Administration: B.B.A. Undergraduate degree offered by business programmes at colleges or universities. Can differ significantly from B.A. or B.S. business programmes.

Bachelor of Fine Arts: (B.F.A.) Undergraduate degree awarded in performing and fine arts. Admission to a programme granting the B.F.A. can be based primarily on an artistic review; academic credentials may be de-emphasized.

Bachelor of Science: (B.S.) Undergraduate degree awarded by colleges and universities upon successful completion of a number of courses which meet certain requirements; typically granted in the natural and physical sciences, or in other professional areas, such as journalism, education, or business. Can require more coursework than a B.A. in the same subject.

College: An institution of higher learning that does not offer graduate degrees.

College Board: The for-profit organization which administers and oversees the SAT, and AP programmes, in addition to the CSS Profile. Responsible for maintaining student test records; will send scores to college upon request for a fee.

Combined Degree: Programme which allows students to earn a master's degree while completing the undergraduate degree, typically in the same field. A number of highly

selective programmes also exist in areas such as medicine, which award admission to both an undergraduate programme as well as medical school.

Co-operative Programme: (Co-op) A small number of colleges offer a co-op programme that offers students the chance to earn money and/or gain relevant work experience for a period of time such as a semester; for example, Northeastern University.

Core Curriculum: A common set of required courses which all students take. Examples of universities with core curricula: Columbia University, University of Chicago.

CSS Profile: College Board administered financial aid form; required by a small number of colleges; employs different and institution-specific methodology than the FAFSA.

Deferral: Postponement of admission decision on an early decision or early action application. Allows college to re-consider a student's application in the regular decision applicant pool.

Deferred Admission: Student-initiated, college-approved postponement of enrolment at a college. Typically, students will take time off to work, travel, or volunteer; students may not enrol in a full-time or degree-granting academic institution.

Demonstrated Interest: The level of interest a student expresses in a college; can include attending a local information session, interviewing, visiting campus.

Distribution Requirements: Courses students must take to satisfy graduation requirements. Might include a certain number of courses in humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences, foreign language proficiency, fine and performing arts, or physical education; varies widely from one college to the next. There are typically many ways to satisfy these requirements and students rarely find it difficult to do so.

Dual Degree/ 3-2 Program: A small number of colleges and universities will offer dual degrees. Unlike a double major, this programme would allow you to earn two separate bachelors degrees in different areas, in business and engineering, for example. Some colleges might offer this possibility through a Dual Degree/ 3-2 program. For example: a student would spend three years at a college completing an undergraduate liberal arts degree in math, and then complete an undergraduate degree in engineering at a different college or university. At some of the more comprehensive universities, it may be possible to complete both kinds of degrees on one campus, sometimes in four years.

Early Action: Non-binding admission programme wherein students apply earlier than normal, typically in November, and hear earlier as well, usually in December. Students are free to apply to other colleges and still have until May 1st to make an enrolment decision. Not an option at all colleges.

Early Admission: Programme that allows students who are not seniors to apply for entry to a college; allows exceptionally bright and mature students who have exhausted the curriculum at their high school to enter college early. Not an option at all colleges.

Early Decision: Binding admission programme wherein students agree to attend a college if admitted. Students apply earlier than normal, typically in November, and hear earlier as well, usually in December. Student must withdraw all other college applications if admitted.

Estimated Family Contribution: (E.F.C.) Used to describe the amount of money a family can afford to pay each year toward educational expenses. Note that this is based on past savings, present income, and future earnings.

Financial Assistance: Program to provide monetary support to students for whom the tuition and educational expenses are prohibitive.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid: (FAFSA) No-fee form required for students who wish to be considered for federal grants, loans and work study funding. Not available until January 1st parents should complete as soon as possible thereafter.

Grants: Money that is awarded based on financial need and does not need to be repaid. Also called "scholarships" or "awards".

Greek Life: The presence of fraternities and sororities at a college.

Humanities: Academic fields of study that analyze and consider the human condition. Includes classics, philosophy, history, languages and literature.

Ivy League: A college athletic conference that includes Brown, Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard, University of Pennsylvania, Princeton, and Yale.

January Admission: Some colleges will admit an applicant for entry in January instead of September. There may be a programme students participate in for the fall term, often abroad.

January Term: A small number of colleges have a short term between the fall and spring terms during which students explore less traditional studies or interests.

Legacy: Term for a student who has a relative who has attended the college to which he or she is applying.

Liberal arts: This approach introduces students to a wide array of subjects across the disciplines. The liberal arts include three broad categories: humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences, but does not include professional programmes, such as education, communications, business, or engineering. Students can study the liberal arts at both colleges and universities.

Major: A major is an academic discipline or area in which a student focuses his or her studies in which a degree is granted. Typically, students have a required series of courses in their major, and a number of courses of their choosing to complete that are related to this academic area. A college might call a major a "concentration". Some colleges allow students to have more than one major.

Matriculate: To matriculate is to enrol in an institution.

Merit-based Aid: Scholarship money that is awarded based on academic, artistic, personal, or athletic talents; does not consider financial need.

Method Test Prep: Online test preparation module offered through the Naviance website. Available for both SAT and ACT.

Middle 50% Range: Typically in regard to test scores; refers to the range falling between the 25th and 75th percentiles.

Minor: A minor is similar to a major, but requires fewer courses. Many colleges will offer the opportunity to have one or more minors in addition to the major. A college might call a minor a "concentration".

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Organisation that oversees and regulates college athletic programmes, including recruitment practices, scholarships, and academic eligibility.

Natural and Physical Science: Academic fields which consider nature using the scientific method; includes astronomy, biology, chemistry, and physics.

Need-Aware: Describes a college that might consider a student's ability to pay when making an admission decision.

Need-Blind: Describes a college that does not consider a student's financial need when making an admission decision.

Open Curriculum: Programme without requirements; there are no required courses.

Colleges with open curricula include Brown University and Hamilton College.

Pre-professional: Pre-professional refers to programmes such as pre-medicine or pre-law; these are usually not considered "majors". Participating in a pre-professional programme gives you access to advisors who can help you apply to graduate school and choose the right classes in order to be prepared to do so. Keep in mind, you can be a pre-med student and major in anything you want – visual arts, English, psychology; the same is true for pre-law, -business, and -vet. Many degrees in engineering, business, education, or other professional areas require a significant number of courses in the liberal arts.

Private Institution: Institution of higher learning that is not run by the national government. Tends to have higher tuition rates than public institutions. Examples: University of Rochester and Carnegie Mellon.

Public Institution: Institution of higher learning that is run by and receives most of its funding from the government. Examples: University of Michigan, College of William and Mary

Rolling Admissions: Admissions programme which reviews applications as they are received. Not available at most colleges.

Social Sciences: Academic fields of study which consider the social aspects of humans; includes economics, psychology, sociology, history, and political science.

Student-Faculty Ratio: The number of students in relation to the number of faculty. Can be misleading; the breakdown of class sizes may be a more useful tool when considering student teacher interaction.

Test of English as a Foreign Language: (TOEFL) Standardized test required by most colleges for non-native speakers of English. Offered at various times during the year; students must work with the ESL office to make arrangements.

University: An institution of higher learning that offers graduate degrees.

Waitlist: An alternate list of candidates for admission. Students on the waitlist might be offered admission, typically during the summer, if space becomes available.

Yield: The percentage of students who accept a college's offer of admission.

2. Information about Careers

www.careercornerstone.org -

The Sloan Career Cornerstone Centre is a non-profit resource centre for those exploring career paths in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, computing and healthcare. Through this site you can explore over 185 degree fields and find out about education requirements, salaries, networking, pre-college ideas, and career planning resources. Browse interviews with hundreds of professionals who offer candid insight into their own diverse careers.

www.bls.gov/oco is a website from the US government's Bureau of Labour Statistics that gives information about certain professions and job types. It projects future job needs for these as well as providing numerous links to professional organizations within each profession/job. Information is revised every 2 years.

www.princetonreview.com

Princeton Review that uses the Birkman Career Questionnaire so that students can get profiles of career styles and interests.

www.collegeboard.org/career/bin/career.pl

A career browser to see job requirements.

www.collegeboard.com/myroad/index.html

Career questionnaire to match interests and abilities to careers.

3. General College Sites

Campus tours: Virtual College Tours. www.campustours.com. Virtual tours with still pictures and descriptions, webcams, campus maps and videos of hundreds of colleges throughout the US.

Collegiate Choice Walking Tours Videos. This is a site run by independent counsellors in New Jersey who offer videos of walking tours of more than 350 colleges.

www.collegiatechoice.com

The College Board. A complete site, with college and scholarship searches, information about the SAT and other materials pertaining to the college search and application process. The college search feature is an excellent source of basic information.

www.collegeboard.com

Peterson's Education Portal. This is an all-purpose site including a college search, as well as information about summer programmes. The site asks you to register before using some of the search engines and other resources but there is no registration fee. There is a charge for some of the services provided. www.petersons.com

NCAA Eligibility Centre. This is an official website dedicated to college athletics. Details about students' eligibility requirements to play NCAA sports are given. There is also a section called the "Guide for the College Bound Athlete".

www.ncaaclearinghouse.net

4. Websites – financial aid

The College Board. This site has a scholarship search, a loan calculator, and an online application form for the CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE form that is required by some colleges. www.collegeboard.com

<http://www.collegeboard.com/parents/pay/scholarships-aid/21406.html>

<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/pay/add-it-up/397.html>

<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/pay/ways-to-pay/477.html>

FAFSA on the Web.

The FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) is the necessary application to apply for any financial aid. This form must be submitted between January 1st and June 30th of the final year of school for families applying for need-based aid.

<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>

Before you can apply for financial aid you must register for a PIN number which you then use for your FAFSA application. www.pin.ed.gov

FastWeb. This site contains extensive information on merit- and need-based scholarships and aid. www.fastweb.com.

FinAid. This is a good site for information about types of financial aid and applying for it. www.finaid.org. It also give information about each state.

Scholarship Scams.

Information from Federal Trade Commission on college scholarship scams.

<http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/microsites/scholarship/index.shtml>

International Students. This site contains information on scholarships and federal programmes for international students. www.iefaf.org

US Department of Educaton. A most comprehensive resource on student financial aid from the U.S. Department of Education. Grants, loans, and work-study are discussed and how to apply for them.

<http://studentaid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/index.jsp>

5. Information about Visas and Immigration

Once you have made a decision on where you will go, you will need to get a visa (unless you are a citizen of that country). If you are an international student going to the US, you should receive a “Form I-20” from the college’s international student advisor after you are accepted. The US Consulate will require this form when you apply for your visa. You cannot enter a foreign country for university study unless you are a citizen, a permanent resident, or have an appropriate visa stamped in your passport.

U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service

<http://www.ins.usdoj.gov/>

Official immigration and visa information from the U.S. government.

Canadian Centre for International Credentials

<http://www.cicic.ca/indexe.stm>

Go to Fact Sheet No. 1 under “Assessment of Qualifications’ for admission information about Canadian universities and colleges.

6. SAT and ACT Test Dates for 2010/2011

October

Saturday October 9 th , 2010	SAT Reasoning & Subject Tests
Wednesday, October 13 th , 2010	PSAT 10 th Grade
Saturday, October 23 rd , 2010	ACT

November

Saturday, November 6 th , 2010	SAT Reasoning & Subject Tests (including Listening)
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December

Saturday, December 4 th , 2010	SAT Reasoning & Subject Tests
Saturday, December 11 th , 2010	ACT

January

Saturday, January 22 nd , 2011	SAT Reasoning & Subject Tests
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May

Saturday, May 7 th , 2011	SAT Reasoning & Subject Tests
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June

Saturday, June 4 th , 2011	SAT Reasoning & Subject Tests
Saturday, June 11 th 2011	ACT

The ISH CEEB Code is: 734425.

Register at www.collegeboard.com for SAT

Register at www.actstudent.org for ACT

7. The SAT or the ACT

Note: This is a mixture and an amalgam of several articles from several different sources.

Not sure about the differences between the ACT and the SAT?

First, look at the requirements of the universities you want to attend – some require the SAT and others the ACT (and a small but growing number of universities/colleges require neither). For those that allow scores from either test, you have a choice to make (or take both!).

Review this information and hopefully it will help you make a more educated decision as to the test that is right for you!

Below are some tables that present some of the similarities and differences between both. Then there is an edited version of an internet article with further information. There are several articles available online describing both tests and what type of student might be suited to either.

College websites should always be consulted before decisions are made. Direct contact with the college admissions office is always a good way to clarify unclear situations.

Under the www.collegeboard.com website one can find information about any US or Canadian college and its testing requirements, e.g.

<http://collegesearch.collegeboard.com/search/CollegeDetail.jsp?match=true&collegeId=228797&searchType=college&type=qfs&word=toronto> (University of Toronto) or

<http://collegesearch.collegeboard.com/search/CollegeDetail.jsp?collegeId=1251&profileId=6> (Harvard College).

College Admissions: SAT vs. ACT

(This is a slightly edited version of an internet article from 2007: http://college-preparation.suite101.com/article.cfm/college_admissions_sat_vs_act)

The ACT and SAT are both standardized college admissions tests, and most selective colleges and universities accept either one. However, each test has advantages and disadvantages, depending on an individual student's strengths and weaknesses.

When students prepare for the test best suited to their skills, they generally score higher – which is obviously the aim in the college admission process.

Knowledge versus Reasoning

The ACT is considered a curriculum-based test, meaning it tests a student's knowledge of subject matter covered in high school. On the other hand, the SAT is traditionally thought of as a test that measures a student's reasoning or critical thinking skills. The SAT is not as straight-forward and is more of an "aptitude" test. Known for using tricky and sometimes intentionally confusing phrasing to determine test-taking skills, the SAT is better suited to the student with strong deductive reasoning capabilities. Good test-takers are said to perform well in the SAT.

Here are some other differences between the two tests, in terms of content, structure, scoring and strategy considerations:

- Differences in Content
 - The SAT puts more emphasis on vocabulary; the ACT is largely focused on grammar and punctuation.
 - The ACT has a Science Reasoning Test, which tests the student's ability to access scientific charts and tables, research, and conflicting scientific viewpoints – whereas the SAT does not.
 - The ACT covers four sections: English, Mathematics, Reading and Science. The SAT contains three sections: Critical Reading, Mathematics and Writing, including a required 25-minute essay. Writing is not required

on the ACT, but strongly recommended – it is available as an optional extra.

- In the ACT Math section, about 7 percent of questions are based on trigonometry, which is not tested on the SAT.

- Differences in Structure

- The ACT has all multiple choice questions; the SAT has mostly multiple choice questions but also requires students to produce answers to mathematical questions.

- Questions on the SAT become more difficult as the test progresses; the level of difficulty remains fairly constant on the ACT.

- Differences in Strategy

- SAT takers are penalized slightly for wrong answers. The conventional wisdom is to try and eliminate one or two answers and then make the best guess from the remaining choices.

- ACT test takers are not penalized for wrong answers. Before time runs out, students should guess on any questions they don't know or are unsure about. But like the SAT strategy, it makes sense to eliminate as many choices as possible before making a final selection.

- The SAT is riddled with questions designed to slow the test taker down. Professional test strategists like the Princeton Review recommend moving on to the easier questions and coming back to the harder ones.

- Differences in Scoring

A student taking the ACT can earn a maximum of 36 points on each section, which the ACT then averages for a composite score. On the SAT, students earn a maximum of 800 points on each of the three sections.

Advice: Practice Questions before Taking Tests

According to Eva Ostrum, in her book *The Thinking Parent's Guide to College Admissions* [Penguin, 2006], "Nothing...beats having your child try practice questions for each test in order to make a fully informed decision" on whether to concentrate on the SAT or ACT.

The ACT and College Board both offer practice tests online. In addition, the ACT offers the PLAN test, a prep test geared to 10th Grade students; and the SAT offers the PSAT, the College Board's Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test, which is usually taken by 10th Grade students.

Take Both the SAT and ACT Tests?

Many students simply take both the ACT and SAT, which provides a choice of two scores for college admissions. If applying to many different colleges, the advantage would be that the student has covered their bases in applying to many different ones.

Read more at Suite101: [College Admissions: SAT vs. ACT: Which Test to Take? Learn the Differences Between the Two](http://college-preparation.suite101.com/article.cfm/college_admissions_sat_vs_act#ixzz0mrGxQDuX) http://college-preparation.suite101.com/article.cfm/college_admissions_sat_vs_act#ixzz0mrGxQDuX

COMPARING THE SAT TO THE ACT

	SAT	ACT
PURPOSE	To assess student reasoning based on the knowledge and skills developed by the student in school coursework	To measure student achievement based on school curriculum
WHEN OFFERED	At ISH at least 6 times a year	At ISH 3 times a year
PARTS OF THE TEST	3 Parts: Writing, Critical Reading, and Mathematics	4 Parts: English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science
LENGTH	3 hours, 45 minutes	2 hours, 55 minutes
ESSAY REQUIREMENTS	60-minute Writing section, including a 25-minute student essay	Essay not required; optional 30-minute essay is offered
MATH LEVEL	Mathematics section includes Algebra II content; Maths section counts for a third of the SAT score	Mathematics section does not include Algebra II content, Maths section counts for a quarter of the ACT score
SCIENCE LEVEL	No Science section	Science section
MULTIPLE SCORE REPORTING	Can be taken multiple times – college have different rules about reporting – some want all scores, others the best for each section.	Can be taken multiple times; only the scores from the selected test date are reported to colleges
GUESSING	Small penalty to discourage random guessing	No penalty for guessing
SCORING	Range from 200 – 800, 3 sections = 2400	Range from 1 -36 in for sections; scores are averaged to provide composite score also ranging from 1 – 36

Note: You may want to find out from each college/university you are applying to how they are using the scores (e.g. will they only take the best score, or will they average all scores).

Source: Thomson Peterson's. (2005). Peterson's Parent's Guide to the SAT & ACT.

	SAT	ACT
Preferred by?	Private colleges; colleges on the east and west coasts	Public colleges; colleges in the middle of the country; more colleges than prefer the SAT
How Questions Appear	Order of difficulty	No order of difficulty
Highest Math Level	Algebra/Basic Geometry; test booklet supplies all formulas	Trigonometry (only 4 questions); test booklet rarely provides formulas
Skills Heavily Tested	Critical Reading, Writing, Mathematics	Grammar and Reading; Mathematics
Penalty For Wrong Answers?	Yes	No
Based on School Curriculum?	Less	More

APPENDIX III Germany

1. Converting the IB to an Abitur (Germany)

The following section was written by an ISH parent to whom this author is very grateful. As this process is complicated and subject to confusion any further information is always welcome.

Conversion of IB Diploma to Abitur and Applications to German Public Universities

Generally speaking German state universities require the IB diploma be converted to the Abitur to support an application for admission to university. This is not always the case, however, in every German university. Each one has their own rules, and the rules can change.

The first step is to research the university on their own website, and then call or email them for clarification if necessary. For example, currently the Brandenburg Technological University (TU) in Cottbus will accept an IB diploma directly, without conversion, and when approached directly in 2009 a department in the Technical University (TU) of Munich accepted the application of a German ISH student by looking at her IB results on-line when she gave them her password . On the whole, the following description is for applicants with German nationality. Applications from EU and non-Eu nationals can vary slightly due to University concerns about German language abilities. Again, contact the university directly for guidance.

Currently Jacobs University (Bremen), Bucerius Law School (Hamburg), and the Carl Benz School of Engineering (affiliated with the TU Karlsruhe) all teach completely in English. Be very careful if a university is private, as it may either not be very good (despite what they promise you), or it may be financially weak and reduce services or go out of business.

Generally, all pupils with an IB Diploma must have the diploma converted from an IB to an Abitur. The diploma is converted by the State (Land) in which the university is

located. German state universities primarily accept applicants on the basis of their Abitur total score, which is why IBs must be converted. The converted IB gives the university the ability to assess the quality of the student and decide if there is space for them, if the student is German. If the student is an EU national, regardless of his converted IB score, the university may accept him anyway, as there is drive to accept other EU nationals, and the quota of these spaces is usually never filled.

If a student wishes to apply to more than one university in different States, then it is recommended to have the conversion done in the State in which one lives. Due to a deadline squeeze the applicant may need to pick up the original of the converted diploma in person from the converting agency, have authenticated copies made in person at the local town hall, and express mail or hand carry the authenticated copies to the universities to which he is applying. Some States use an outside agency to do the conversion, rather than a governmental agency. The website, or the admissions office, of the university will advise which agency they use. For example, Hamburg uses “Uni Assist” an outside organisation, whereas Baden-Württemberg uses the “Regierung Präsidium Stuttgart, Schule und Bildungszeugnisanerkennungsstelle.”

As ISH is located in Hamburg it is presently unclear how to handle multiple applications, as Uni Assist, the outside agency used by the University of Hamburg, is located in Berlin, and are slow to answer emails, if at all. It is recommended to talk to recent graduates from ISH as well as to contact the local Hamburg School Authorities (“Schul Behörde”) directly. (Peter Lamp has been the contact so far, but may be retiring. His direct email is: peter.lamp@bsb.hamburg.de and his direct phone number is 040-428 63 2067. If there is no answer try the general phone number 040 428 63 1931).

Applications to German public universities are due by July 15th of each year. On July 5th, or close to that date, paper copies of IB results are sent to the German universities and government agencies that the student is applying to. In the Spring of his final year, the applicant must give the IB ProgrammeCoordinator at ISH the exact name and address of all the German universities and organizations who need the results. Ask the IB ProgrammeDirector the deadline for giving him this information. Currently six copies may be requested at no charge. Additional copies require a fee.

Because July 5th and July 15th (the deadline to apply and the date IB results are issued) are so close, applications to German public universities follow two parallel tracks. The applicant must submit an application to the university that is complete in every detail, except for the missing IB/Abitur results. Simultaneously the applicant must create a file with the agency that will be converting his IB to an Abitur. This file must be created by the end of April, or at least four to six weeks before July 5th, as the agencies require time to process all data for conversion.

When the IB is converted to an Abitur, if authorized in writing to do so, the issuing agency will send a fax of the converted document to the designated university in their State. This is necessary to complete the application with the university by the deadline of July 15th. (If you are applying to more than one university in different states, make sure the universities will accept the converted Abitur from the agency who prepares it in your home state.) The original of the converted IB diploma will be mailed to the applicant. Due to the large number of individuals who require a conversion of their IB diploma, as well as the large number of applicants to German universities, it is often necessary to pick up the original of the converted diploma in person and hand deliver it to the university that requires it. If not, the July 15th deadline can be missed. Electronic copies of the converted Abitur are not currently available from the agencies. If the converting Agency says they will fax your converted IB/Abitur diploma to the relevant university, make sure the university actually receives it!

The converted Abitur issued in July is only a provisional, limited conversion, as it is based on a document issued by the IBO to the agency to meet a deadline. When you receive your own actual, original IB Diploma in the mail in August or September, which has all the necessary seals and signatures from the IBO, you must show this document to the converting agency to finalize the conversion from IB Diploma to Abitur. Don't forget to do this before the deadline, as the conversion made in July will expire.

If, after some time, a student changes German universities, the converted IB should be recognized in the new state without a need to repeat the process, if you remembered on time to show the conversion agency the original document issued to you in August or September.

Documents required by the Agency to convert the IB Diploma to an Abitur

Establish contact by telephone with the relevant agency to check the list below, and the name and address of the individual who will be handling your file. Be very patient and nice. If you are a parent it can help to explain your child is in school until four pm which is why you are calling for them. (Understandably, German agencies and universities generally expect applicants to be managing their own application process.) Documents can be in German, English or French. Original documents will only be returned if you provide a stamped, addressed envelope, and run a small risk of being lost. Stamped, approved copies of originals can be obtained from the local town hall (e.g. Besucher Zentrum, Bahnhofplatz, Blankenese).

Cover letter for documents saying you want to open a file to convert the anticipated IB Diploma into an Abitur and explaining which university and what subject you are applying for. (Abitur diplomas generally convey the right to study any subject. It must be determined that the subjects studied for the IB Diploma are sufficient for the subject that you wish to study at university. Apparently this is not usually a problem.)

- Copy of correspondence with university to which you are applying to justify conversion of IB. (For example, a copy of an email from the university to you about the application.)
- CV (resume) that includes listing of education from grade one to twelve. (If you have skipped a grade or repeated a grade, clarify this point with the agency on the telephone as they are looking for 12 years of continuous education. The agency may, or may not, require proof of attendance at all previous schools). No photo required on resume.
- Report cards for the last three years stamped with school seal. (This substantiates the IB Diploma preparation and that the education leading up to the IB was of a sufficient quality).
- Town hall (“Amtliches”) copy of passport or German ID card.
- Signed letter giving permission to release the converted IB by fax to the relevant university, including the name, university and fax number of the person to whom it should be sent.
- Fee €100

If you are concerned that you have not taken the correct selection of courses, at the correct level of difficulty, to convert your IB Diploma to an Abitur, it is highly recommended to contact the Hamburg School Authorities directly.

For example, if the student is taking Math Studies, he can still convert his IB to an Abitur if he takes an exam from the Hamburg School Authorities. According to the Hamburg School Authorities, Maths Studies is apparently only slightly less demanding than the Maths required for an Abitur.

Information regarding the formula to convert the IB Diploma to an Abitur can be found in English on the website of the IBO itself:

http://www.ibo.org/country/universities_rec.cfm?country_code=German...

The German language website www.anabin.de for “the recognition of foreign secondary school diplomas” also provides essential information. For example, the formula used to convert the IB points to Abitur points, and other conversion requirements (maths, foreign languages, etc.) can be found at;

http://anabin.de/dokumente/IB_Diploma_04.pdf

Various German websites forums exist in which prospective students can place questions when trying to decide between one university and another in Germany. One such site showing such a discussion in German is:

<http://www.btu-forum.de/viewtopic.php?f=70&t=3456>

APPENDIX IV

Reference materials (USA and UK)

The following list is a brief list of resources you may find helpful in the college/university search. There are innumerable guides available.

Comprehensive Objective Directories

Barron's Profiles of American Colleges. Updated every two years

The College Board College Handbook. Published annually.

Peterson's Guide to Four-Year Colleges. Published annually.

Peterson's Guide to Two-Year Colleges. Published annually.

Directory of Canadian Universities. (AUCC Publications)

Subjective Guides

Getting Financial Aid. Published annually by College Board.

The Fiske Guide to Colleges 2010. Updated annually.

The Insider's Guide to the Colleges (Staff of the Yale Daily News). Updated Annually

Greene's Guide to Educational Planning: The Public Ivies (Harper Collins 2001)

The Hidden Ivies: Thirty Colleges of Excellence (Harper Collins 2000)

Rugg's Recommendation on the Colleges. Frederick E. Rugg

Loren Pope. Colleges That Change Lives. Penguin Books. (Also at www.ctcl.org)

Loren Pope. Looking Beyond the Ivy League, Penguin Books.

Sidonia Dalby, Sally Rubestone, Emily Harrison Weir. (Macmillian). The International Student's Guide to Going to College in America

The Virgin Alternative Guide to British Universities (Virgin Books).

The Times Good University Guide (Harper Collins Publishers).

College Board Publications (a selection):

Book of Majors;

College Handbook 2010;

Scholarship Handbook;

Getting Financial Aid;

International Student Handbook.

APPENDIX V Suggested Reading for Parents, 1st Year Students and Education Professionals generally

Ahmad, Shaheena. The Yale Daily News Guide to Succeeding in College. New York: Kaplan Books, 1997.

Antonoff, Steven R. and Friedemann, Marie. College Match. Alexandria, Virginia: Octameron Associates.

Barkin, Carol. When Your Kid Goes to College: A Parents' Survival Guide. New York: Avon Books, 1999. (After the author's son went off to college she interviewed parents around the country to get their perspectives).

Boyer, Ernest L. Smart Parents Guide to College. Princeton, New Jersey: Peterson's.

Coburn, Karen Levin and Madge Lawrence Treeger. Letting Go: A Parents' Guide to Understanding the College Years. New York: Harper Collins, 4th Ed. (Co-authored by a College Dean and a psychotherapist).

Cohen, Harlan. The Naked Roommate: And 107 Other Issues You Might Run into in College. Napierville: Sourcebooks, Inc., 2005.

Featherstone, Bonnie and Reilly, Jill. College Comes Sooner Than You Think, Dayton, Ohio: Ohio Psychology Press.

Karabel, Jerome. The Chosen: The Hidden History of Admission and Exclusion at Harvard, Yale and Princeton. Boston: Mariner Books.

Mathews, Jay. Harvard Schmarvard: Getting Beyond the Ivy League to the College that is best for you. New York: Three Rivers Press.

Johnson, Helen E., Christine Schelhas-Miller. Don't Tell Me What to Do, Just Send Money: The Essential Parenting Guide to the College Years. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000.

Jones, Marilee and Ginsburg, Kenneth. Less Stress, More Success: A New Approach to Guiding Your Teen Through College Admissions and Beyond. (By an admissions director at MIT and a paediatrician).

Kilpatrick, Frances and James. The Winning Edge: The Athlete's Guide To College Sports. Alexandria, Virginia: Octameron Associates.

Rowh, Mark. Coping with Stress in College. New York: College Board Publications.

Rubenstein, Sally and Dalby, Sidonia. Panicked Parents' Guide to College Admissions. Lawrenceville: New Jersey: Peterson's.

Steinberg, Jacques. The Gatekeepers. New York: Penguin Books.

Thacker, Lloyd (2005). College Unranked: Ending the College Admissions Frenzy. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.