

The Li Po Chun UWC

Big

University

Guide

updated August 2006

Author's Notes

The LPC BUG may be accessed in 3 ways:

- On the LPC network: Academics drive > Universities > BUG
- On the website <http://home.lpcuwc.edu.hk/bug/>
- As an A5-sized paper booklet

Reading this on computer is by far the more versatile and effective way of using the Guide:

- The Table of Contents is hyperlinked to the rest of the document – click on any entry and you will transfer directly to that section.
- In various places I have used hyperlinks to take you to other parts of the Guide or to other files, email and websites.
- In general the underlined words represent hyperlinks.

The BUG is organised into several chapters with the first providing general university information, then individual chapters for the 4 most popular places to study (Britain, Canada, Hong Kong and USA), a chapter containing information on English Medium universities in Europe, a chapter on other universities around the world, a chapter on standardised tests (mainly about SATs and TOEFL for US colleges), and a chapter about taking a gap year. I recommend that you all read through the first chapter General University Information to familiarise yourselves with its contents, then skim read through the chapters for the places you are most interested in. For example if you need financial aid and don't have predicted grades in the 40s, you should probably concentrate on USA and Canada.

While I have thoroughly checked the Guide before publication, I expect that some mistakes and inaccuracies remain. The latter may occur through misinformation, misunderstanding or simply because the information has become out of date. These may become more obvious once you have started at your university. Please let me know of any corrections to make or additional information you think should be included so that I can keep this Guide relevant and effective for the LPCers that follow you.

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General University Information

Introduction

This Guide has been produced for you, the students of Li Po Chun UWC, most of whom are planning to study at university after graduation from LPC. While I encourage you to seriously consider studying in your home country I accept that for some of you this may not be possible and even where it is possible the quality of university education may be significantly higher in other countries. For others the attraction of a different university system from their own or the lure of scholarships to study in overseas universities may be sufficient to start them considering overseas options.

It would be difficult for me to provide detailed information on university systems in all the countries that our students come from. I rely on you to thoroughly explore the university options in your home country and then ask for any assistance that you think I can give. This Guide will focus on the 4 places where 90% of LPC students attend university: Britain, Canada, Hong Kong and United States.

In many ways you are more fortunate than your peers at other schools around the world, even other international schools and even some of the other UWCs. The IB Diploma is a highly regarded university entrance programme and the academic level in terms of IB Diploma scores reached by LPC students is amongst the highest in the world. While selective universities may consider many diverse factors in deciding whether or not to offer a place to a student, they all agree that the most important factor is intellectual ability – the potential for academic success in their programmes. Your performance in the IB Diploma programme is probably the most significant measure of this.

Resources

The main resources you can access for researching universities while at LPC are:

Academic Centre

- University prospectuses, catalogues and brochures are filed by region on the shelves in the Academic Centre.
- Current copies of the most useful books are available in the Academic Centre. These are to remain in the Academic Centre – I will treat books and university prospectuses removed from the Academic Centre without my permission as stolen.
- Out of print books and a few single-copy books are available on loan from me.
- Meetings with me.
- Many universities provide videos or video CDs – these are stored in the Library.
- University Noticeboard – lists of visiting university representatives, notices about scholarships and other relevant information sent to me from time to time.

LPC Network > Academics folder > Universities folder

- LPC University Database – in LPC Applications and Offers folder (see [Appendix 2: LPC](#)

[University Database](#) for quick links); see me for the most updated copy.

- [Degree Course Descriptions](#) articles about UK university courses
- Web sites – web links folder

Higher Education offices in HK

- UK [British Council](#)
- US [IIE](#)
- Canada [CEC](#)
- France [EduFrance](#)
- Spain [Cultural Officer at the HK Spanish Consulate](#)
- Australia [Australian Education Centre](#)
- NZ [New Zealand Education Centre](#)

Others

- The Guidance section of the Council of International Schools web site (<http://higher.cois.org/guidance/guidance.htm>)
This site has a wealth of information about universities around the world. In particular check their:
 - page of links to [UNESCO descriptions of Educational Systems Around the World](#)
 - section on Country Educational System Overviews with detailed descriptions of higher education in USA, Canada, UK, Australia, New Zealand, US 4-Year, Degree-Granting Institutions in Europe and the Middle East, Other Degree/ Diploma/ Certificate Programs. These descriptions have been downloaded and are found in Appendix 8 of the BUG.
 - Financial Aid Tables (<http://higher.cois.org/Resources/FinancialAid.htm>) listing financial aid figures for universities in many countries.
- LPC alumni – see me for contact details.
- University visits – most universities visit LPC in the 1st semester making September through to November a busy period. December through March is a bit quieter but there are still many universities visiting in this period. Notable are the combined University of London (LSE/UCL/Kings/Imperial) visit and the combined Yale/Wellesley/Chicago/Duke visit – both are likely to become annual events in the 2nd semester, and both are aimed at 1st years although 2nd years with offers may wish to meet with the representatives. Emily posts an updated list of scheduled visits on the University Noticeboard.

Make good use of these visits by reading the university's materials beforehand so that you can get clarification on confusing or ambiguous points. Many students report that getting replies to email queries from some places is slow or they just never get responses (consider phoning – rates to the US and UK are amongst the lowest in Hong Kong) so these visits are excellent opportunities to ask questions directly from admissions people.

Forms

Copies of most forms that you need for your university research and application process can be found in the perspex shelves in the Academic Centre:

- ISFAA – International Student Financial Aid Application
- Common Application for US universities
- LPC teacher evaluation form
- Student Information form
- Non Quan Cai Activities form
- University Criteria Checklist (or see [Appendix 3: University Criteria Checklist](#))

General university websites

- <http://stauffer.queensu.ca/reference/college.htm> is a useful website linking to individual university websites around the world

Main university destinations for LPC students

summarised from 2000-2006 matriculations

Country	% LPC students
US	47 %
UK	20 %
Canada	13 %
Hong Kong	12 %
Netherlands	2 %
other countries	6 %

Application Deadlines

Most application deadlines are either the date of receipt by the university (all UK and HK applications) or the postmark date (most US applications). If US and Canadian applications do not specify that the deadline is a receipt date then you can assume that it is the postmark date.

Deadlines for Hong Kong Universities

2007 Entry

Name of University	Deadline	Submit to Emily
HKUST	31 Dec 2006	30 Nov 2006
Baptist University	14 Jan 2007	16 Dec 2006
Hong Kong University	Early Decision 15 Dec 2006	Early Decision 30 Nov 2006
	27 Jan 2007	13 Jan 2007
Chinese University	3 Feb 2007	24 Jan 2007
City Polytechnic University	28 Feb 2007	3 Feb 2007
Hong Kong Polytechnic University	28 Feb 2007	3 Feb 2007
Hong Kong Academy for Performance Arts	7 Apr 2007	27 Mar 2007

Remember to submit your application forms as early as possible.

Submit the confidential reference form (specify your choice of course) and a \$3 stamped and addressed envelope to Emily before the deadline.

We can only estimate the above deadlines based on those for last year. Emily will publish updated deadlines as they become available.

Deadlines for Overseas Universities

2007 Entry

University	Official Deadline	Application Package Submit to Emily	Submit What ?
Oxford & Cambridge	20 Sept 2006 (requiring an interview in HK)	Collect Oxbridge application form from Emily before 25 Aug 2006	Specify the choice of the College and subj (Submit your student data & non-QC activities form to your tutor for writing testimonial ASAP.)
	15 Oct 2006 (interview in UK)	5 Sept 2006 (requiring an interview in HK) 18 Sept 2006 (interview in UK)	Completed Oxford / Cambridge application form Registration for the relevant test
UK (UCAS) For Oxford, Cambridge or <i>Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine or Veterinary Science</i>	15 Oct 2006	18 Sept 2006	“Declare” online UCAS form (Submit your student data & non-Q activities to your tutor for writing testimonial ASAP.)
US Early Decision or Early Action	1 Nov 2006 15 Nov 2006	9 Oct 2006 16 Oct 2006	School Report Form with your name and address (no need to put the subjects) + addressed envelope with \$10.5 stamps (see Note 1) YOU send the application form by postmark deadline
UK (UCAS) Regular	15 Jan 2007	End of China Week 13 Nov 2006	“Declare” online UCAS form
UK (UCAS) <i>Only for Art & Design Route B</i>	7 Mar 2007	7 Feb 2007	“Declare” online UCAS form
US Regular Decision	Varies but usually around the end of December	1 Dec 2006	School Report Form with your name and address (no need to write in subjects) + addressed envelopes with \$10.5 stamps ea (see Note 1) YOU send the application form by postmark deadline
Canada	Usually around March – check prospectus	At least one month before university deadline	See Emily/Steve if not sure
Australia New Zealand South Africa	Usually after leaving LPC	March	See Emily/Steve if not sure

NOTE:

For all US applications, give Emily the School Report Form: write your name + home address on front (no need to put the subjects because we add transcript) and attach A5-sized SAE with \$10.50 stamped addressed envelope. For document weight over 70g, please add \$1.30 for each additional 10g or part thereof.

- If you submit your forms to Emily later than the above deadlines, I do not guarantee that they will be posted to meet the university deadline. Submit your forms to Emily EARLY
-

Approx Deadlines for Hong Kong Scholarships

2007 Entry (For Hong Kong students Only)

Name of Scholarship	Submit to Emily	Application Deadline	Results Released
Sir Edward Youde Memorial Scholarships for Overseas Studies (refer to Note 1) Studies leading to an undergraduate degree www.sfaa.gov.hk/eng/scholar/sevm4.htm	15 Sept 06 (if want Principal as referee)	29 Sept 06 (Student Application) 13 Oct 06 (Referee Statements)	Mar
The Jardine Foundation Scholarships (refer to Note 1) (any one of the preferred Colleges or Universities, which include Exeter, Oriel, Queen's and Trinity at Oxford, and Downing, Magdalene and Trinity at Cambridge www.jardine-foundation.org	6 Oct 06	20 Oct 06	Interview in early Jan 2007
The Prince Philip Scholarships (for Cambridge applicants) (refer to Note 1) www.cambridge.org.hk/PrincePhilip/index.shtml	3 Oct 06	15 Oct 06	Before 4 Jan 07 Offer/reserved
Sir Philip Haddon-Cave Scholarship (for Cambridge candidates, priority will be given to candidates admitted by King's College, Sir Philip's alma mater) (for both HK and Mainland China students)	11 Nov 06	1 Dec 2006	Final Result released after IB results released
The Alice Louey Scholarship (for US and UK universities)	30 Nov 06	31 Dec 06	Interview in May
Hang Seng Bank Overseas Scholarship (for Harvard, Princeton and a third leading university in US or UK) www.hangseng.com/hsb/eng/abo/cc/e/schdtl/main.html	9 Jan 07	31 Jan 07	May/June
Hong Kong Schools Alumni Federation of Southern California Scholarship Foundation (for US schools) www.hksaf.org	9 Jan 07	20 Jan 07	Mar/Apr (Interviews) May/Aug (Result released)
The University of Toronto (HK) Foundation Scholarships (for University of Toronto, Canada) www.utoronto.com.hk/	13 Feb 07 (if want Principal as referee)	15 Mar 07	Mar/Apr
Dr Lee Shau Kee Scholarship (for University of Toronto, Canada) www.utoronto.com.hk/	13 Feb 07	1 Mar 07	End Jun
Dr. Cheng Yu-Tung Scholarships (for University of Toronto, Canada) www.utoronto.com.hk/	13 Feb 07	15 Mar 07	
Fung Yiu King Memorial Commerce Scholarship (for University of Toronto, Canada. Commerce Studies) www.utoronto.com.hk/	13 Feb 07	15 Mar 07	
Ho, Leung, Ho & Lee Scholarship (for St. Hugh's College, Oxford University, UK) HK student with offer from St. Hugh's College will be considered by the Selection Committee automatically	Student with offer from St. Hugh's College will be automatically considered by the Selection Committee. No need to submit application.		Interview in Jan
Dr Lee Shau Kee Scholarship (for Wadham College of Oxford University, UK)	15 Jul 07	To be published in Chinese press in July 07	Interview in Aug
The GET Foundation (for US college / universities) www.thegetfoundation.org	1 Apr 07 (if want Principal as referee)	15 Apr 07	
AmChan Chamber of Commerce Charitable Foundation (for US colleges / universities) http://www.iiehongkong.org/scholarships/amcham.htm	3 Apr 07 (if want Principal as referee)	15 Apr 07	by the end of Jun

Notes:

- The Principal will give a supporting letter for students with:
 - 7 or more As HKCEE
 - 6 more As at HKCEE and predicted grade of 40 or higher
 - 5 more As at HKCEE and predicted grade of 41 or 42
- You should submit the application forms as early as possible with an A4 addressed envelope with sufficient stamps. We estimate these deadlines based on those for last year. Emily will publish updated deadlines when she gets them.

Costs

(estimated costs for 2007)

Country	Tuition	Living expenses	Total
US	\$15,000 (public) \$25,000 (private)	\$10,000	25,000 US\$ (public) 40,000 US\$ (private)
UK (EU citizens)	£10,000 (£1,150)	£8,000	£18,000
HK	<i>Means tested for HK students</i>	very low if live at home	
Canada	\$15,000	\$10,000	25,000 CAN\$
Australia	\$15,000	\$10,000	25,000 AUS\$

[Approximate exchange rates: £UK = 14 HK\$; \$US = 7.8 HK\$; \$CAN = 6 HK\$; \$AUS = 5.5 HK\$]

- The above figures are approximate averages for overseas students. Total costs will vary with both institution and course chosen.
- Private US universities can cost up to twice as much as public ones. By contrast UK, Canadian and Australian universities are nearly all public therefore their tuition costs are quite similar within the particular country.
- In the UK science degrees cost more than arts degrees. Refer for example to The Times Good University Guide 2007 (copies in the Academic Centre).
- The south of the UK has higher living costs than the north and London is by far the most expensive UK city to study in. Refer for example to the [LSE Overseas Student Living Costs](#), which estimates the non-tuition cost per year (excluding vacations) at ~£8,000.
- An Australian research team completed a comparative survey of tuition and living costs at universities in US, UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Their results were summarised in an SCMP article in 2002. A copy of the full article is in [Appendix 4](#) while a table showing the approximate costs is shown here.

All costs in HK\$

	Australia	US (private)	US (public)	UK	Canada	New Zealand
<i>Arts</i>	290,000	1.1 million	630,000	450,000	320,000	270,000
<i>Business</i>	290,000	1.1 million	630,000	450,000	430,000	260,000
<i>Science</i>	330,000	800,000	520,000	520,000	330,000	280,000
<i>Engineering</i>	460,000	1.1 million	520,000	520,000	450,000	400,000

Comparing US, Canadian and UK universities

	US	Canada	UK
<i>Funding</i>	many private as well as public	public	public
<i>Costs (refer to Costs table above)</i>	highest	medium	high [low for EU residents]
<i>Financial aid for international students</i>	many	Many small, several full, + a few UWC scholarships	few scholarships nearly all < 30% of total cost
<i>Undergraduate degree</i>	4 years	4 years	3 years
<i>When to choose major</i>	usually by end 2nd year	usually by end 2nd year	at time of application
<i>Broad or specialised</i>	liberal arts at many universities	usually have distribution requirements	only specialised programmes (no distribution requirements)
<i>Application costs</i>	30 – 50 US\$ (fee waiver available)	50 – 100 CAN\$ (generally no fee waiver)	pay a single UCAS fee ~£15 (no fee waiver)
<i>Application system</i>	apply individually to each university	generally apply individually	maximum 6 universities through UCAS
<i>Predicted grades</i>	less emphasis on predicted grades	in between	most emphasis on predicted grades
<i>Type of offer</i>	unconditional	usually unconditional	conditional on IB results
<i>SATs</i>	most require SATs	SATs only for US students	none

In many respects the undergraduate programmes at US colleges (especially liberal arts programmes) and at UK universities lie at opposite ends of the range of university study available around the world. Canadian universities offer undergraduate programmes very similar to those in the US while Hong Kong and Australian undergraduate programmes are similar to UK. Several Canadian universities have scholarship support for international students, especially those from developing countries, while Australia has very little international scholarship support available.

What Do You Want In A University?

Whether you are choosing 10 universities in one country or a spread around the world such as 6 UK, 3 Hong Kong, 3 Canadian and 3 US, you will probably need to make your choices from a large list of suitable universities. Having a balance of 'stretch' and 'realistic' universities with a couple of 'safety' choices is usually a valuable strategy. Many books on US colleges thoroughly cover the various criteria that you should consider – both of the Fiske books are excellent starting points. The list of criteria below is indicative rather than comprehensive, to help you begin considering the factors that may be important to you.

As you research different universities over a period of several months, it may become difficult to recall the distinguishing features that appealed to you – it is useful to have a system of recording details of the various criteria that are important to you. I suggest using a table like the [University Criteria Checklist](#) in Appendix 3 – copies in the Academic Centre shelves.

- Curriculum
 - Size
 - College of Atlantic 270 compared to Ohio State University 50,000
 - most liberal arts colleges around 2,000 students
 - Location
 - urban or rural
 - close to city or isolated
 - access to sports, arts, travel
 - most liberal arts colleges are in rural or small town settings (Macalester is an exception)
 - Climate
 - Personality
 - formal or relaxed
 - conservative or liberal
 - academically competitive
 - Class sizes
 - small classes like LPC or large lecture hall lessons
 - Teaching done by ...
 - faculty or graduate students – in liberal arts colleges all teaching is by professors while in some universities lectures by professors are followed by tutorials run by graduate students
 - Facilities
 - extracurricular
 - social
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 - Cost
 - Scholarships and financial aid for international students
 - % of students international
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-

Predicted Grades

1. IB predicted grades are the grades that your teachers predict you **will** achieve (rather than the grades you **are able to** achieve) in your IB exams at the end of your 2-year IB programme. Some students do not make enough effort towards their studies to achieve the grades of which they are capable and may receive predicted grades below their ability.
2. During your time at LPC your first predicted grades are produced after the exams at the end of your 1st year. These are the ones used for Oxford applications.
3. Teachers are asked to update the predicted grades at the end of September only for early UCAS (medicine, vet) applicants. In late October they are also asked to update only for USA Early Decision and Early Action applicants.
4. The predicted grades are updated in the main grading session in late November (used for Regular Decision applications to US and for UK, Hong Kong and Canadian applications) and finally in March for the IB.
5. Teachers are free to update your predicted grades at any time but they are required to update them at the dates in #4 above.
6. The predicted grades sent to universities will always be the most recent ones.
7. UK universities use few 'tools' for assessing a student's academic ability, so predicted grades are very important. Most US universities use several tools (predicted grades, SATs, transcript covering last 4 years high school, 3 teacher references) so while predicted grades are important their effect is moderated by other factors – eg low predicted grades can be compensated by high SATs and strong references.

In 2001 an LPC student predicted 33 out of 42 (which was also his final grade) won a place at Swarthmore, at that time ranked 1st amongst US colleges. He had been able to prove his academic ability to Swarthmore in other ways, such as high SATs and a strong transcript from his previous school which he supported with an enthusiastic and vibrant contribution to LPC during his time here.

Student Information Form and the College Testimonial

Most university applications require a recommendation about you from LPC, usually from either the Principal or the University Counsellor. In all of these cases we will use the LPC Testimonial. This is first drafted by your tutor, then I edit it and it is finally signed by the Principal. It is important that you provide your tutor with accurate and relevant information to help them write the most useful testimonial for you. Complete the Student Information Form and Non-Quan Cai Activities Form (shelves in Academic Centre) and give to your tutor by the end of your 1st week in August for Oxbridge, UK medicine, veterinary science and dentistry, and by end September for all US and UCAS applications. For later applications such as Canada, Hong Kong and many other countries submit the forms to your tutor at least 1 month before the testimonial is needed. If the application deadline is after you leave LPC make sure that your tutor has the forms before you begin your IB exams.

Encourage your tutor to meet individually with you to discuss this information and to allow you to provide clarification – accuracy and detail are important.

Scholarships and Financial Aid

Some scholarships provided by independent organisations give financial support at the university of your choice but most are offered by the university and are therefore tied to that institution. There are many places to research sources of scholarship and financial aid for study at university. The following are particularly useful:

- [LPC University Database Scholarships Report](#) – the Database records offers of places and scholarships made to LPC students since 2000. This Scholarships report is updated at least once per year in early August and shows which universities have offered scholarships to LPC students, how much was offered and what predicted grades the student had when applying. Note that some countries (eg US) distinguish financial aid (need-based financial support) from scholarships (merit-based and often awarded regardless of need) – all financial aid is recorded in the Database as ‘scholarship’.
- Scholarships Master File – this is a folder (in the Universities folder on the Academics drive on the LPC network) containing several documents with university scholarship information for various countries around the world. This is updated each year during summer by Emily – you should check the accuracy and current validity directly with the university or website listed.
- University websites – most have information about any scholarships the university provides for international students.

For information in this Guide refer to the scholarship section within each country chapter:

- [Britain](#)
 - [Canada](#)
 - [Hong Kong](#)
 - [USA](#)
 - [Mexico](#)
-

Maximum 10 applications

LPC will support up to 10 applications total worldwide for each student. Any university system that only requires one application for several universities (such as UCAS and the UC application for California) counts as one of the 10 applications.

The purpose of this policy is to distribute the workload on Emily and myself fairly amongst all students – if you feel that you really need an 11th application, you’re welcome to discuss your situation with me. I aim to have each of you who wants to go on to university after LPC, receiving at least one offer from an affordable university of your choice.

We keep your transcripts and other LPC records on file for several years after you graduate from LPC. You are welcome to contact me or Emily for help with university applications after you have left LPC.

Suggested calendar for university applications

Year 1

- March** Attend lecture on preparing for university applications
- Familiarise yourself with this Guide if you haven't already
- March – May** Begin initial research into universities of your choice
- Attend sessions by visiting universities
- Talk to your tutor about your choices
- Email to yourself connection details to access this Guide as a research resource during summer
- Collect an ISFAA form if needing financial aid for US
- Summer** Complete a draft ISFAA with your parents (new ISFAA for your year not available until after summer)
- Discuss university choices and financial support with parents
- Write draft personal statement (UCAS) and application essays (US)
- Visit universities where possible
- Enquire about scholarships and university funding within your country

Year 2

- August** Complete Oxbridge and UCAS applications if applying to Oxbridge
- Aug – Nov** Continue research into universities to narrow choices to 10 and UK choices to 6
- Collect updated ISFAA and send to parents for completion
- Research availability of scholarships
- Attend university visits
-

Careers advice

It is worthwhile researching your career opportunities before committing to your university studies, especially where you initially apply for specific courses such as in Britain. The Degree Course Descriptions software ([see above](#)) contains information about the careers that different courses lead to, and the excellent British Council website (<http://www.educationuk.org/>) has the Subject Focus page on the Study Advice pull-down menu that provides detailed information on many courses at UK universities. The New Zealand careers counselling web site <http://www.kiwicareers.govt.nz/> has much information about many careers as well as links to similar web sites in other countries. The Canadian university research website at <http://www.schoolsincanada.com/> also looks very useful for careers info: you need to register, then follow the links for careers.

Specialist Programmes

These links take you to institutions offering specialist programmes – it's a growing list and I will add more as I encounter them. These programmes are available in many countries but may be more accessible at these institutions.

Hospitality industry, hotel management, etc	International University of Applied Sciences Also many schools in Switzerland - check Switzerland file box
Medicine	Royal College Surgeons in Ireland
Veterinary Science	Massey University (New Zealand)

Things to do

Informing yourself

- University visits
- LPC Academic Centre Library – books and university catalogues
- Universities Notice Board (outside Academic Centre)
- Internet
- British Council / IIE / Australian Education Centre / Canadian Education Centre
- 2nd years and alumni

What to do in summer vacation

- Research different colleges.
- Do everything possible to ensure that you can enter university at home if that is an option for you. It is crucial to have a fall-back plan. Even students with predicted grades of 38+ are sometimes unsuccessful in obtaining necessary financial aid.
- Investigate fully any possibilities that might exist for financial aid from your own country. Consult the US Embassy in your country to see if they offer any funding programmes to students from your country.
- While the Australian Government provides little financial aid for international students, most of what it does provide is to 'developing' countries and is only made available through the student's home country. You may wish to research these possibilities when you are home.
- Obtain from your previous school official transcripts of your school work for the two or three years prior to coming to LPC. Return to LPC with any original exam certificates.
- Collect the International Student Financial Aid Application (ISFAA) form from the Academic Centre shelves and complete over summer – needs parents' signatures.
- Discuss your plans with your parents. Especially you need to know how much financial support they can offer you throughout your expected time at university.
- I recommend that you return to LPC after summer with a shortlist of around 20 to 30 suitable universities. During the 1st semester of your 2nd year as you collect more information, reduce this list to the 10 or fewer that you will apply to.

Develop realistic self-knowledge

- Think carefully about what you want to study and where you want to study it. Consider intrinsic interest and possible future career.
- Define the extent of your ambition. Be optimistic and realistic.
- Be an interesting person! That's what universities are looking for. With the limited time that you have at LPC you can aim to do many things superficially or a few things well. Universities are more interested in the latter - depth rather than breadth.
- Your summer break is an excellent opportunity to take courses, join programmes and do extra service work, all things that you might not have time for during the College year. These will enrich you as a person and thus can only help your university applications.

Your education is the best investment you make for the rest of your life

Dealing With The Replies

You may find the following useful to refer to during your final semester at LPC.

"From Stress to Success!"

by Carol Eichert, former counsellor at HKIS

The "good news" the "bad news", the "fat envelope", the "skinny one"! These words will be heard often in the very near future as responses from colleges arrive in your mailboxes. The "good news" is when you hit your target and are accepted into the school(s) of your choice. The "bad news" is anytime you have made an application and are rejected. Many of you included in your choices one or two "reach" schools where the likelihood of admission is slim. Obviously, the application list should include mostly schools where the likelihood of admission is high. These are "target" schools.

The "fat" envelope often includes an acceptance letter and housing forms; the "skinny" one could be a rejection letter, but then again, it may not be. Do be brave and open the "skinny" envelopes as well. However, if the letter is an admission denial, it will be disappointing. But "rejection" does not mean "unacceptable". A denial usually means a college simply had too many applications for the available spaces in its dormitories, or that the college felt (based on its experience and judgement) that you would likely not have a successful experience there.

Rejection shatters confidence. If repeated often, it can do major damage to your sense of self-worth. That's why it is important to make wise choices toward target schools when you begin the process. Acceptance to a particular college is often viewed as admission to future success and ultimate happiness. It may even be thought that acceptance to a prestigious university is a mark of value and worthiness. But, **don't let a college decision become a part of your self-image**. Admissions decisions are often subjective and impersonal. They reflect human judgements, and human judgements can never be infallible. For all the information colleges have about you, many parts of your strengths may still remain unassessed. **No matter what a college decides, you are inherently and completely acceptable!**

If you are not admitted to your first choice, recognize your feelings. Dealing with setbacks is never easy. Rejection hurts, and it will hurt for a while and there is no way around it. But reactions to such setbacks distinguish a person with character and grit from someone who is a quitter. Your ability to handle a denial says a great deal about you as a person and as a successful college student - wherever you decide to attend. You will bounce back and make the most of your other choices. Take advantage of the opportunities your accepting schools offer, choose one you will attend, do your best academically, then make a contribution to your new campus community, work on your people-skills, develop friendships and you're on your way to an exciting future. "Fitting in" is still more important than "getting in".

Britain

Introduction

Britain has an excellent university system with many high quality institutions. However financial support

is very limited for most people outside the European Union so study in Britain is only realistic if:

- you are an EU resident OR
- you can afford to fully or mostly fund yourself OR
- you can access one of the few, usually highly competitive, scholarships (there are a few available to HK students, and a few more to some Commonwealth citizens) – these generally require strong academic results.

Applications to UK universities are centralised through [UCAS](#) (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service), a system that can be both a blessing and a frustration. Restricting you to a maximum of 6 courses forces you to make some difficult choices as well as clear prioritising in your goals. This provides an even greater challenge when you consider that it is often difficult, sometimes impossible, to change your chosen major after starting your studies without delaying the completion of your degree – permission to transfer to a different major will be affected by the availability of places in the new courses, the ability to ‘cross-credit’ your existing courses to your new major and the university’s acceptance of you into the new major (ie the new major might be more selective than your existing major).

If you are likely to go to university in Britain it is important to spread your choices from reaches to safeties - **one useful strategy for your 6 choices is to include 2 reach, 2 match and 2 safety**. However if you think you will likely study elsewhere (eg US or Hong Kong), then you might want to make all your choices reach or match.

Completing the one relatively short UCAS application form does however save you an enormous amount of time compared to the relatively bloated application system for US universities where you might complete 5 – 10 pages of application for each university. Since UK universities receive less information about you on which to make their admission decisions, you need to make sure that what you write has maximum effect – this is crucial in your personal statement.

Oxford and Cambridge have the earliest application deadlines of any university to which you will apply – receipt in UK by 1st October and 15th October respectively. The application deadline for medicine, dentistry and veterinary science in the UK is also early at 15th October. Note that the full UCAS form must be completed for any of these, which means that your UK university research must be mostly completed by the start of your 2nd year when you arrive back at LPC in August.

The British Council (<http://www.educationuk.org/>) provides an excellent website to help with your university research – check out the Subject Focus page on the Study Advice pull-down menu for lots of information about specific fields of study, where to study it, links to more info and so on. You may also find [UKCOSA](#) to be a useful website to start at. The UK [Department for Education and Skills](#) has relevant information for international students including a link to a page to determine your fee status (EU resident or not).

Resources

Information in Hong Kong

British Council (Hong Kong)

3 Supreme Court Road, Admiralty, HK

Tel 2913 5100

<http://www.britcoun.org/hongkong/index.htm>

Books

- *The Times Good University Guide* – This provides an excellent overview of UK university education with overall rankings of universities as well as rankings by subject. The book has 2-page summaries of all UK universities and is revised annually.
- *UCAS The Big Guide* – THE reference book for UK courses; updated annually but some information likely to be out of date by the time you apply – need to check the UCAS website for current details.
- *The Virgin Alternative Guide to British Universities* – Reviews of UK universities distinguished from other guides by including samples of student opinion.
- *How To Get Into Oxford and Cambridge* – excellent resource for Oxbridge applicants; copies available on loan from me

Web sites

UCAS	http://www.ucas.com/
scholarships at British universities	http://www.britcoun.org/home/learning/learning-learning/learning-funding-your-studies.htm

Rankings

Various newspapers publish their own rankings – the rankings in the Times book above are probably as valid as any.

UCAS

All of the following information, and much more, is covered in the various UCAS publications and on their web site. Particularly useful publications (stored in the Academic Centre library) are:

- **Go Higher with British Education – A Guide for International Students:** An A5-sized booklet providing an introduction to UCAS
- **The Big Guide** – a thick A4-sized book listing details for all courses offered at UK universities. The enclosed [CDrom](#) that contains course information and allows easy searches (for example to find all universities offering a particular course) is placed on the LPC Network (Universities folder) in August each year. As course details are being continually revised until the start of the academic year, some of the information may be out of date when you complete your application form – check the UCAS web site for updated information before finalising your course choices on the application form.

Applying to UK Universities

UCAS application

A single application form providing spaces for up to 6 courses (at 6 different universities or some at the same university) is completed and sent to UCAS, which then distributes the application information to the universities. Note that you are limited to a maximum of 4 courses in each of the areas: medicine, dentistry, veterinary science and veterinary medicine. UCAS only reveals to a university the information relevant to that university – each university does not know what other universities you have applied to. The form has 4 pages: the first 3 are completed by you as the applicant, the 4th page contains your LPC testimonial. The cost of applying to UCAS is £15 (or £5 if you apply to only one course).

UCAS “Apply”

We use the online Apply method for all UCAS applications – you will create an online application which you can open to amend and edit repeatedly until it is complete. You first need to register yourself as an LPC applicant by opening the web page at <http://www.ucas.com/apply/index.html#>. Choose the student login for the correct year of university entry and select REGISTER. Follow the instructions until you are asked to enter a BUZZWORD – the buzzword for LPC is lipochunuwc. Once registered you will be asked to choose a username and password for your personal application.

Applying to UCAS after you have graduated from LPC

Use “Apply” as described above.

Use the Admissions Statement!!

Every course at every university in Britain should have its own Admissions Statement. This provides a detailed description of what is required to gain admission to that course at that university. Amongst many other things it should detail what they are looking for in your personal statement, and in the interview if it is required. You will probably only find these on websites – complete a course search on UCAS or on the university’s website. If you are serious about your UK applications, you should find and read the Admissions Statements for the courses you have applied for. As an example read the [Admissions Statement for Medicine A100 at Bristol](#).

Personal Statement

This is the section provided to allow you to sell yourself.

1. You should aim to explain clearly why you have applied for the courses you chose. State any relevant work experience or career aspirations that relate to your course.
2. Positions of responsibility and leadership – outline your achievements both in and outside LPC.
3. School activities – have you been a member of any school/LPC teams? do you play a musical instrument? Have you been involved in drama productions? have you visited theatre or outside lectures?
4. Out-of-school activities – what do you do? Community service in your free time is particularly important.
5. Work experience – detail could be included here if it is relevant. For some careers work experience is virtually essential eg medicine, veterinary science.
6. Format – there are 2 acceptable styles and both have been used successfully:
 - Essay style with clear focused paragraphs on particular points mentioned above. Write in full sentences.
 - Headings and bullet points – this can make your achievements stand out and make the personal statement easier to follow.

7. You may need to edit your personal statement many times. Ask your tutor to help check it.

See also the Help screen in UCAS Apply

How to write an effective personal statement (Durham University)

<http://www.dur.ac.uk/undergraduate/apply/personalstatement/>

The first thing you must remember is that your personal statement will probably be the only opportunity you get to "talk" directly to the admissions tutor on the programme you want to study. It is therefore vitally important that you make this statement as effective as possible! If you do apply to a programme which invites candidates to interview, your personal statement may also form the basis of your interview.

Your personal statement is an opportunity for you to demonstrate why you think you would be a good student for the programme you are applying to and why the University should select your application over those of other candidates. It is primarily an academic statement and you must target it very directly towards the subject in which you are interested, though a University will also want to know something about your more general interests.

We recommend that you cover three main areas in your personal statement in the following order:

1. Why do you want to study this subject?
2. What have you done in the past that makes you particularly suitable to study the subject?
3. What else have you done that would contribute to the course and the university community and makes you an interesting and unique individual?

1. Why this subject?

This could be a short sentence and needs to capture the reason why you are interested in studying on the programme you are applying for. Some of the most effective personal statements start simply, for example, "I want to study History because...". With this opening statement you are trying to communicate to the admissions tutor your enthusiasm for the programme. You might want to think about these questions and areas:

- Your knowledge of the subject area
- What does the programme entail?
- Why does it interest you?
- What interests you the most?
- Where could studying the programme lead?

2. Why You?

Once you have outlined your reasons for being interested in the programme you are applying to, you need to demonstrate why you would be a good student. In this section you are trying to convey your inclination and ability to study on the programme. You need to be able to show the admissions tutor that you have the right background in terms of academic ability and the right interest or inclination, that is, that you know what the programme you want to study involves. For example, if you want to be a primary school teacher but have never worked with children of that age the admissions tutor will wonder what your inclination to study to be a teacher is! When writing this section you'll need to think about and quote evidence from:

- Your academic studies
- Any voluntary work
- Your hobbies and interests
- Things you have learned from books, newspapers, TV programmes and so on
- Experiences in your year out (if you are having one)
- Any relevant work experience (e.g. medicine, physiotherapy)
- Particular project work in your studies

3. Are you interesting and unique?

Finally, you should write about what makes you an interesting and unique person; all those extra

things you have done or experienced which will bring something extra to the community of the University you want to join. It doesn't matter what you've done, you need to reflect on the skills and lessons you have learned and write about that. You may want to cover:

- What do you enjoy doing outside of school
- Your hobbies, leisure activities
- Sports you participate in
- Other sorts of extra-curricular activities
- Significant responsibilities you hold, at home or in clubs or societies
- Special achievements
- What you have learned if you have had a job
- Remember to mention these parts of your life, and if appropriate the skills that will help you with the course.

Some common questions...

Q How can I write a personal statement about the programme I want to study when I want to apply to three (or more!) different sorts of programme?

A You can't! It's possible, but harder, to write a statement that covers two different areas but three simply won't fit. Remember, your personal statement needs to convince an admissions tutor that you are the right student for their programme and trying to do that for three or more programmes in one personal statement doesn't work.

Q How far back should I go when mentioning my extra-curricula activities?

A You should only mention those things which help support your application; a long list of everything you've done is much less impressive than picking on one or two things and writing about the skills you learned through them. Remember also that recent activities may be of more significance than those a long time ago. The activities you took part in over the summer will carry more weight than the awards you won when you were six!

Q I think I have achieved some truly great things in my life, should I not make sure these achievements make up the bulk of my personal statement?

A Anything that makes you a unique and interesting individual is important but always remember that an admissions tutor is primarily interested in why you want to study their course.

Q I'm not interesting or unique!

A Yes you are! Everyone has special skills, experiences or achievements to mention. We don't have any set ideas for what we are looking for, we just want to know what makes you, you.

Q Do I need to use long words and elaborate language to impress the Admissions Tutor?

A No! An Admissions Tutor will be impressed by the use of good English; a personal statement needs to be well written, in simple English, and laid out carefully. If you try too hard to impress with clever language you will normally make your statement harder to read and your reasons for wanting to study a particular programme less clear.

Every year in August the Languages Department makes a presentation to the returning 2nd year students about writing personal statements and application essays. A booklet of advice and samples is distributed at this meeting – you should all have this by Orientation Week in your 2nd year. See also [Appendix 6](#) for examples of personal statements by successful LPC students.

Note that when you cut and paste your personal statement into the UCAS application, your text will be reformatted to a particular size and font and you will not be allowed to complete this section if your personal statement is too long.

Studying Law and the LNAT

Note that applicants to study Law at several UK universities are required to sit the LNAT, the National Admissions Test for Law. Check the website <http://www.lnat.ac.uk/> for more details.

Studying Medicine or Veterinary Science and the BMAT

Note that applicants to study Medicine, Veterinary Science and related courses at a few UK universities are required to sit the BMAT, the Bio-Medical Admissions Test. Check the website <http://www.bmat.org.uk/> for more details. In Sep 2006 these universities were Oxford, Cambridge, Bristol, Imperial, UCL, and the Royal Veterinary College – you should check each year for the updated list.

BMAT has only one test date (in 2006 this is 1 Nov).

See me (Steve) to borrow a copy of the "Preparing for the BMAT" guide.

There is a deadline for registration to sit the test – in 2006 this is 29 September. If you are applying to Oxbridge, you must enter the registration details on your Oxbridge application form. If you want your Oxbridge interview in Hong Kong (ie most of you), the deadline for Oxbridge to receive your application is 20 September and we will post your applications 1-2 weeks earlier. Therefore you need to register at the latest by early September.

Studying Medicine or Dentistry and the UKCAT

More than 20 universities now require you to take the UKCAT, Clinical Aptitude Test (<http://www.ukcat.ac.uk/home/>) if you apply for medicine or dentistry. Note that if you apply to universities from both the BMAT list and the UKCAT list, you must sit both tests. These UKCAT universities are listed on <http://www.ukcat.ac.uk/home/faqs/eq/>.

The test may be taken at either of 2 centres in HK. Notice the special requirements when you turn up to sit the test (such as HKID or passport or turning up on time) - if you do not meet these you will need to pay for another test.

Whereas BMAT has a single test date, you may register to sit the UKCAT on a choice of dates. But note that the final date to take the test in 2006 is 28 September (in later years check the website for changes). There might be difficulty booking a test space so read the information carefully and book soon if you need this test.

Tuition Fees

Students who are 'normally resident' within the European Union are entitled to heavily subsidised tuition fees – this maximum of £1,150 in 2004 may be further reduced after the student's family has been means tested. Approximately a half of all such 'home status' students are fully exempt from paying anything. 'Normally resident' means that you were living in the EU before coming to LPC and that you are only here for educational purposes – ie your family still lives within the EU. While each UK university uses the same rules for determining whether or not you meet the EU resident conditions, you might find variation from university to university if your situation is unclear. If you are unsure you need to have your status confirmed by contacting your chosen universities. Refer also to the [Department for Education and Skills web page to determine your status](#).

Non-EU students pay full-cost tuition fees which are likely to be in the following ranges:

(from the Times Good University Guide 2007)

Subject	£ Sterling
Humanities and Social Sciences	£7,600 – 8,500
Sciences and Engineering	£8,300 – £10,900
Clinical subjects	£19,500 – £22,700

Scholarships and Financial Aid

As UK universities are publicly funded, there is minimal scholarship support from the universities. Several universities do have financial aid money available (need-based) as well as scholarships (merit-based). Several scholarships are available from other organisations however these tend to be highly competitive. Check the Scholarships Database for a complete list of scholarships that we have on record. The following table gives links to scholarships at some UK universities. Many other universities will have some financial support – check their web pages. Also check [UKCOSA](#), [British Council](#), [Scholarship Search UK](#), and [LSE's financial support web page](#).

University	Notes
Bath	financial aid as well as 50 scholarships of £3,000 per year for students paying full fees
Dundee	several £2,000 scholarships + a few 50% scholarships
Durham	£2,000 scholarships
Exeter	dedicated Law scholarship (£3,000) for an LPC student + several other scholarships in various subjects
King's College	
LSE	financial aid for overseas students
Manchester	
Newcastle	
Nottingham	
Reading	also check for financial aid
Sheffield	4 scholarships of £4,000 each for IB students, as well as Engineering, Law and Science scholarships
UCL	One full tuition scholarship for HK and PRC students + several smaller (£3,000 – £5,000) scholarships available
Warwick	
York	

[Degree Course Descriptions](#)

This is a software package containing articles written by leading UK university professors about courses that they teach. It contains articles on over 100 courses and is an excellent resource for researching courses that you might be interested in as well as the professions that they lead to. Included in each description are links to relevant web sites and a section on career opportunities. There is also an article entitled Taking A Year Out (find it under All Descriptions on the categories menu at the left) about gap years – it includes links to web sites offering gap year opportunities. You can access Degree Course Descriptions through the hyperlink above or within the Degree Course Descriptions folder in the Universities folder on the LPC network.

Replying to UCAS: Firm & Insurance Choices

From January through to March (earlier if you applied to Oxbridge) you may receive decisions from UK universities about your applications. These decisions are not official until you receive a letter from UCAS stating the universities' decisions.

Each decision will either state the offer or state that you have been unsuccessful this time.

Offers may be **conditional** (usually conditional on particular IB grades or on a total mark, usually out of 45 but sometimes out of 42) or **unconditional**.

You must reply to **each** of your offers in one of the following 3 ways:

1. Firm acceptance

You can only accept one offer firmly.

If you accept an unconditional offer firmly you commit yourself to that course and must decline all other offers.

If you accept a conditional offer firmly and you achieve the grades for that offer, you are committed to that course and will not be able to go elsewhere in the UK – your insurance choice is cancelled.

2. Insurance acceptance

If you receive 2 or more offers and you firmly accept a conditional offer, you may also accept a 2nd offer as insurance. If you achieve the grades for this insurance acceptance (but not the firm acceptance), you are committed to this course.

3. Decline

You must decline all other offers.

When making your first and insurance choices you do **not** reply directly to the universities. From Feb/March onwards UCAS will write to you requesting your replies – you must reply directly to UCAS. The deadline to reply to UCAS is for you, and may well be different for other students. Think carefully about your replies – when you reply accepting a course, you are committed to that course.

UCAS Extra

If you applied for 6 courses and you did not receive any offers from those choices or you declined all offers, you may find a suitable place through the UCAS Extra process. From mid March 18 to late June, universities that have vacancies may publish them on the UCAS website. Students who are not holding offers from any of their 6 courses may apply for these vacant places. UCAS will automatically send you details of UCAS Extra if you meet the above conditions.

Clearing

If you do not receive any offers or you fail to meet the conditions of your insurance offer, you may find places during Clearing in August and September. Clearing is a special service where universities can offer unfilled places to students without places. To facilitate this process UCAS and many UK universities are represented at a Clearing fair in Hong Kong. UCAS will automatically send you details if you are eligible for Clearing.

Planning for studying and living in Britain

Once you have a confirmed place at a UK university, the university is likely to send you general information about moving to Britain with details about immigration, living costs, climate, transport

options and so on. The [Durham University Handbook for International Students](#) is a detailed resource for information of moving to and living in Britain. While some of this information pertains to Durham University, most of it is generally applicable to study anywhere in Britain. As many of you studying in Britain will be in or around London check the LSE website <http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/studentServicesCentre/newArrivals/>. I recommend that all students planning to study in the UK spend some time reviewing these 2 resources. The [UKCOSA](#) website is also a useful source of information.

Oxbridge

Although part of the UCAS network, [Oxford](#) and [Cambridge](#) also have their own application system and deadlines. You may apply to Oxford or Cambridge but not to both. There are around 30 colleges in each university and students apply to a particular college although the courses are centrally administered for the whole university. Within their college students are assigned to small tutorial groups of around 1 to 3 students for each tutor – this tutorial system is a key feature that distinguishes Oxbridge from other UK universities.

Most applicants to Oxford will need to sit a test related to the course they applied for. The tests are scheduled in early December – copies of previous tests are filed in a folder in the Academic Centre. Applicants to Oxbridge for medicine and veterinary science need to sit the BMAT sometime around November (cost approx £45). Your BMAT registration details must be included on your Oxbridge application form.

While many students may wish to apply to Oxbridge, it must be recognised as an intensely competitive process. The minimum predicted grades that LPC will support for application to Oxbridge are a total of 38 out of 42 and 6,6,7 at Higher Level. I will consider requests from students with a 37 total but they are unlikely to receive my support unless they can show a distinguishing strength in their application.

While your application is made with the predicted grades from the end of your 1st year, I am prepared to notify Oxford or Cambridge, as well as your other UK universities of changes to your predicted grades after the November grades are available – you need to see me to request this.

Refer to [Appendix 5](#) for a transcription of the chapter on The Application Form from the Oxbridge book mentioned below.

You might also find it useful to check the website [Alternative Prospectus](#) established by Cambridge Students.

Interviews

Interviews are scheduled around late October for Oxford and November or December for Cambridge. Different colleges have different practices for selecting students for interview: eg Downing College (Cambridge) invites all students for interview at Cambridge if they are available to interview in the UK, but if the student states s/he is not available for interview in the UK then only short listed students are invited for interview in Hong Kong, and then only a fraction of these would be expected to get offered a place.

Read the [Cambridge Interview booklet](#) for guidance on preparing for the interview.

Books

- *The Times Good University Guide* – Useful overview of Oxbridge and profiles of all the colleges.
- *How To Get Into Oxford and Cambridge* (on loan directly from me) – Detailed information on the application process and choosing your college. It has useful sections on preparing for the interview.

The book was published in 1998 and is now out of print so its information on the various colleges may be becoming out of date – use the Times Good Guide for details of the colleges.

Application Deadlines

Both Oxford and Cambridge must receive your applications by 15th October if you will interview in Britain but note that if you choose to have your interview in Hong Kong, the deadline is brought forward to 20 September.

The Oxford applications can all be sent together to the main Oxford Undergraduate Admissions Office, which will distribute them to the various colleges. But the Cambridge applications need to be sent to the admissions offices of the individual colleges. Cambridge applicants may need to cover the costs of sending their applications by courier.

Oxford Admission Criteria

Check <http://www.admissions.ox.ac.uk/courses/criteria.shtml> for the Oxford admission criteria for various majors. This should be useful to help you focus your personal statement and interview responses.

How should you use the Referee's section?

What may be sent?

Both Oxford and Cambridge provide a space on their application forms for a referee comment. They also both suggest that if there is nothing to add beyond the UCAS reference (which here at LPC is our testimonial written by your tutor), then we should just attach the UCAS reference. One difference is that Oxford does not allow *extra* sheets to be attached while Cambridge provides a small space for extra comments and does allow both an extra reference and a copy of the UCAS reference to be attached. The result is that you can send two references with the Cambridge application but only one with the Oxford application.

Should you send an extra reference?

All UK universities want references to describe your performance and potential in subjects relevant to your chosen course, such as:

- history, English, modern languages and maths (analytical ability) for Law
- sciences and maths for Medicine
- maths and economics for Economics or PPE
- physics, maths and art for Architecture

You should explain this to your tutor and encourage him or her to write in depth about the relevant subjects in the testimonial. Another reference (or even just a few pertinent comments) written by the teachers of these relevant subjects should add valuable further support to your application. If you can persuade these teachers to write a reference (even a short one of 1 or 2 paragraphs) then do so – they need to give this to Emily by the end of Orientation Week. However, you must realise that this might be a very busy time for the teacher(s) concerned and they may quite reasonably say they cannot help within this time frame. This is not their fault (or your fault), it just reflects the early deadline that Oxford and Cambridge imposes on us. If a teacher says s/he is too busy to help, you might ask that s/he send some feedback by email to me or to your tutor for inclusion in the testimonial. In any case, ask the relevant teachers early!

What about Oxford only allowing one reference on the application form?

Oxford applicants need to consider this carefully. You can choose whether to have only the UCAS reference used on the Oxford form or to try for an extra reference and hope that UCAS sends your UCAS application (with the LPC testimonial) quickly to Oxford. The earlier you complete your UCAS form, the earlier we can send it to UCAS and then the sooner Oxford receives it. Note that Oxford will initially read your application with the one reference attached to it and if you are interviewing in Hong Kong, Oxford's earlier deadline of 20 Sep suggests they need to make a decision on your application quickly. You might prefer to have your tutor's testimonial address all the relevant issues (ie relevant subjects) and include that on the application form rather put an extra reference on the form and risk Oxford making their decision

based on this alone because the UCAS application was not received in time.

Choosing a college

Deciding on the college seems to cause more questions and uncertainty than any other issue. Read the web pages that both Oxford and Cambridge provide on this topic

<http://www.admissions.ox.ac.uk/colleges/choosing.shtml>

<http://www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/colleges/choosing.html>

FAQ

1. *Do I need to use the Personal Statement section in the Oxbridge application form?*

I recommend that you do use this section rather than leave it blank since Oxford and Cambridge will be expecting successful applicants to have lots to say about themselves – if you don't have any more to say than your UCAS Personal Statement then you might be seen as just too limited. Use this space to both supplement your UCAS Personal Statement and to focus specifically on your Oxbridge application (course and college applied to).

2. *Should I write my Personal Statement in the box on the form or may I paste a printed copy on the form?*

Pasting a printed Personal Statement is quite acceptable but make sure that it is well stuck down, especially at the edges – these forms are often photocopied and if your form jams their photocopier, well, I know what I would do with it if it happened to me.

3. *Should I attach certificates for my previous education?*

No, these will be requested if needed.

4. *Can I apply to Oxbridge if I want to take a Gap Year?*

In general, applying for deferred entry for a Gap Year is acceptable if you are applying for non-science courses, but not acceptable for such courses as Medicine, Physics or Maths. Check directly with the college to which you are applying to find out what they recommend.

Canada

Introduction

1. Canadian Universities offer 4-year undergraduate degrees similar to those in the US. For general degrees you do not need to specify your intended major on the application form and the university typically requires you to decide your major by the end of your 2nd year. Most application deadlines are in the 2nd semester.
2. Canadian universities are nearly all publicly funded which means that financial aid for non-Canadians is not common (although much more common than from the similarly public-funded universities in Britain). Read the article [Financial Assistance for International Students: How it works at Canadian Universities](#), in the Scholarships section, for an overview of financial aid for international students.
3. While some universities might offer admission conditional on particular IB scores (usually for

particular courses), in general their offers are based on the same conditions as US university offers – ie that you maintain a standard similar to your transcript grades.

4. Many universities offer 1st year course credit for IB HL scores of 5 or more – this exempts you from taking that course and in all cases reduces the length of your degree.
 5. Most degree programmes have distribution requirements similar to those at most US liberal arts colleges – ie there will be a required breadth of courses within your degree.
 6. Canadian undergraduate degrees are widely recognised internationally making it easy to transfer to US and other universities for graduate study.
 7. The American Colleges and Universities website has a useful overview of Canadian universities at <http://www.acuinfo.com/index.do>.
 8. The Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada website (<http://www.aucc.ca/>) has a page linking to all Canadian universities (http://www.aucc.ca/can_uni/our_universities/index_e.html)
 9. Application to universities in Ontario Province is centralised through the Ontario Universities Application Centre (www.ouac.on.ca) to which you submit one application to cover all Ontario universities. Universities in other provinces have their own application forms.
-

Resources

Information in Hong Kong

Canadian Education Centre (HK) 1216 China Merchants Tower
 Shun Tak Centre 168 Connaught Rd, Central, HK
 Tel 2524 9668
<http://www.studyincanada.ca/hongkong/>
<mailto:cechk@cecnetwork.ca>

Books

- *The Macleans Guide to Canadian Universities* – rankings, university profiles and a scholarship directory (although not always obvious if international students are eligible), updated annually.
- *The Directory of Canadian Universities* – useful profiles of Canadian universities, updated annually.

Web sites

(also see #7 and 8 above)

<http://www.studyincanada.com/>
<http://www.schoolsincanada.com/>

Rankings

Refer to the publications listed above for current rankings.

Scholarships and Financial Aid

Although Canadian Universities are publicly funded, several have scholarships for international students, as well as a few special scholarships for UWC students (Trent, Simon Fraser, and Alberta). The main scholarships that I know about are described below under the university headings – there are many smaller scholarships available from various universities which provide an incentive to go to that university rather than making the university affordable to those with limited funds. The following article by Karen McKellin provides a useful overview of FA for Canadian universities – note that the costs relate to 2001 so the figures may now be a little out of date.

Financial Assistance for International Students: How it works at Canadian

Universities

By Karen McKellin, University of British Columbia (2001)

How does financial assistance work in Canada for international students and what should students and their parents know when deciding whether they can afford a Canadian university education?

The key to understanding Canadian universities is the knowledge that education in Canada is a provincial, not a federal, responsibility. Most universities in Canada are public institutions funded by their provincial governments. They are accountable to the Canadian taxpayers in those provinces for the tuition fees they charge and the way in which they dispense public funds, particularly in relation to students who are neither Canadian citizens nor permanent residents of Canada. While provincial governments have authority to regulate or de-regulate fees for Canadian citizens, most allow individual universities to set their own international tuition fees and to establish their own internal policies and practices in relation to scholarships or financial assistance for international students.

It is for this reason that international tuitions in Canada will vary considerably according to each institution. Tuition for a typical Bachelor of Arts or Science program across Canada ranges from a low of about \$5,000 CAD a year to a high of \$14,000 CAD. Affordable though these tuitions may seem when compared to the out-of-state fees charged by most U.S. universities, these fees can be anywhere from 2.5 to 7 times higher than those charged to Canadian citizens or permanent residents whose tuitions are generously subsidized by provincial governments. One of the most important factors contributing to the affordability of Canadian tuitions is the favourable Canadian-US dollar exchange. In June of this year, the rate of exchange was \$1.52 CAD to \$1.00 USD. At this rate, a \$14,000 CAD tuition fee converts to a mere \$9,000 US dollars.

Tuition fees are not the only consideration when students and their parents are deciding whether they can afford to study in Canada. The cost for housing, food, books, lab fees, student fees, transportation, health insurance, clothing and entertainment will vary widely, depending on the region. Universities located in smaller centres may offer more affordable housing than in larger centres, but that may be offset by the higher cost of food and clothing or transportation. A student's lifestyle choices will also affect his cost of living, but on average, according to the Association of Universities and College of Canada (AUCC), a first year undergraduate student will need an estimated \$7,000 to \$10,000 CAD an academic year in addition to tuition to cover related costs.

Admission to Canadian universities is need blind. Students are considered for admission on the basis of their academic achievement and whether they have met the requirements for admission, and not on their ability to pay. Rarely will students be asked to state on their application whether they are applying for financial aid. It is assumed that when students apply to a Canadian institution, they are aware of the costs of attending, and if admitted, will be able to meet their financial obligations. Very few Canadian universities will waive application fees, although some do not require application fees from students applying from United World Colleges.

Canadian universities, like their U.S counterparts, distinguish between need-based financial assistance and merit-based scholarships or awards that are based on academic achievement and not on the financial circumstances of the student or parental income. Few institutions, with perhaps the exception of Trent University, have set up need-based scholarship programs for outstanding international students who would otherwise not be able to afford to study in Canada. Trent's exemplary International Scholarship program provides for several tuition plus costs entrance scholarships for outstanding students, as well as some smaller awards administered on the basis of outstanding academic achievement as well as financial need. Just this year, UBC, which charges the highest international tuitions in Canada, unveiled an ambitious new need-based financial assistance program that will award entrance scholarships, ranging from \$12,000 to \$27,000 CAD, to outstanding international undergraduate students. The University of Ottawa, which currently does not offer financial assistance

to international students, is actively considering a fund-raising campaign to establish international scholarships out of private donations.

These examples are encouraging, but they hardly constitute a trend. Like their U.S. counterparts, Canadian universities caution international students planning to study at their institution that financial assistance is limited and students will need to depend primarily on parental support, savings, loans or scholarships from their home country in order to cover their tuition and living expenses in Canada. They further advise students that when they apply for Canadian Student Authorization (student visa) they will be asked to demonstrate to Canada Immigration - through bank statements and other means - that they have sufficient funds to cover their tuition and living; costs during their first year in Canada.

Canada's Student Loans and other provincial loans and grant programs that operate exclusively on the basis of financial need are only available to Canadian citizens or permanent residents (landed immigrants) of Canada. There are few if any university-administered borrowing programs in Canada for international students, with the exception of the Stafford subsidized and unsubsidized loans, available only to American citizens and permanent residents of the US. Students and their families must first complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Only those Canadian universities that have a Title IV code from the U.S. Department of Education may administer these loans. U.S. students relying on the Stafford program should make sure that the Canadian university they are applying to has (and has retained) this code.

The story is somewhat different when it comes to merit-based scholarships. Although policies differ institution by institution, a number of Canadian universities - University of Toronto, McGill, UBC, York, Simon Fraser and others - open their university-funded merit scholarships to all students, regardless of citizenship. International students may also be eligible for privately funded awards that are based on criteria other than citizenship. Naturally the competition for merit-based awards is keen, and the chances of an international student winning one of these can be slim indeed - but not impossible. Recently, an international student won one of York University's highest entrance awards. To even the playing field, Queen's University this year initiated a set of merit-based entrance scholarships for outstanding international students who were previously ineligible for their regular entrance bursaries.

For the most part, once students are in attendance in their program, restrictive criteria based on citizenship disappear. Many Canadian universities allow international students to compete for in-course awards on the basis of high academic achievement beginning their second year, whether they are Canadian citizens or not.

When it comes to emergency bursaries or work-study programs, again policies differ institution by institution. Generally, those Canadian universities which vigorously support student success will defer fees for a short period of time, and ensure that international students are not denied emergency bursary funds if they encounter unexpected financial difficulties. These funds are usually modest, one-time grants to cover students' basic needs. Administrators caution students not to depend on having regular access to these funds to pay tuition or supplement their income.

Under the terms of their authorization to study in Canada, international students are expected to be in full-time attendance at a university, which precludes having a full time job. Although they may only work part-time on campus during the academic term, students may work full time on campus during the summer. They are also allowed to work for one full year in a field related to their studies, once they graduate. International students may obtain employment authorization to participate in paid co-operative education work terms, if it is an integral part of their degree. Not all universities allow international students to participate in their co-op programs, so again, it is important for students and their parents to inquire about what each university offers or doesn't offer when determining which institution is right for them.

University work-study programs, which provide provincial wage subsidies for students hired into part-time jobs on campus, vary in the degree to which they are open to international students. Some universities allow their international students to compete for work-study jobs; others, sensitive to the concerns of provincial taxpayers, restrict international student access to such programs.

Lower average tuition fees, moderate living costs, and the lower Canadian dollar are factors that without question put a Canadian education within reach of many international students around the world. This should not be cause for complacency among Canadian universities. Canada's universities, which have a strong tradition of humanitarian assistance to developing nations, have a more tangible level of support for international graduate students than they do for undergraduates. They could do better.

Some might argue that with provincial subsidies waxing and waning as unpredictably as they have in recent years, financial assistance for international students is a kind of social activism that they can no longer afford. Indeed, the fiscal reality may mean that in order to provide a more extensive array of need-based financial assistance for international undergraduate students, Canadian universities may have to raise their international tuition fees so that a portion of these higher fees can be plowed back in to support viable assistance programs.

There may be another practical reason why Canadian universities are not developing more need-based scholarships. To ensure such programs have integrity, universities must find a way to properly assess the financial situation of international students and determine parental income. This is difficult to do in an international context and from a distance. In this area they could perhaps learn from their U.S. colleagues who seemingly have developed appropriate and efficient ways of doing this.

These practical considerations aside, it is my belief that Canadian universities, as well as U.S. universities that are committed to internationalization should consider the long-term benefits, not just for the students who receive assistance, but for the life and vitality of their own institutions - and their own nation - in making it possible for students from a diversity of backgrounds and citizenships to attend their university. This year at UBC we admitted eight new international students under our brand-new need-based awards program. These students were nominated by their secondary schools on the basis of their outstanding academic achievement, leadership skills, community involvement and personal statement of goals. Not one of them would have been able to attend UBC or any other North American university without financial assistance. These students, the majority of whom were nominated by ECIS member schools, are from Mexico, Moldavia Colombia Argentina, Hungary, Norway, Hong Kong and Turkey. We know we are making a difference in the lives of these bright and intelligent young people, but we are very much looking forward to them making a difference on our campus. These outstanding individuals won these awards fair and square, but in my opinion, it is our institution and Canada itself that will be all the richer for it.

I am indebted to the following for sharing with me their policies on financial assistance for this article: Vanessa Grafi, York University; David Zutaugas, University of Toronto; Linda Kemp, Queen's University; Andre Pierre LePage, University of Ottawa; Cynthia Bennett-Awe, Trent University; Thevi Father, Simon Fraser University.

Trent University UWC Scholarship

Each year [Trent University](#) offers this scholarship specifically to a total of 4 non-Canadian UWC students. Refer to [Trent International Program](#) for other scholarships available to international students. Each UWC may nominate 2 students for this scholarship (students may not apply for this UWC scholarship directly). A sign-up list for students wanting to be considered for nomination will be posted in December – ask if you do not see the list. The deadline for receipt of the nomination package by Trent is around the middle of February each year. Application forms for Trent University and for their other Trent International Programme Scholarships are with Emily. Refer to [Appendix 7: Trent UWC Scholarship](#) for more

information.

Simon Fraser University Shrum Scholarship

[SFU](#) offers the Shrum International Entrance Scholarship for UWC students to approximately 5 students each year. There is no nomination process – you apply directly to SFU for the scholarship using the special Shrum Scholarship application form (look in the SFU file box in the Academic Centre). Receipt deadline by SFU is usually around mid February.

York University

York University has several full scholarships described on their [scholarships web page](#). The deadlines for all are mid March.

- 1 UWC scholarship
- 4 West Africa and Kenya scholarships
- 3 Caribbean scholarships

It also has 4 Global Leader of Tomorrow Awards and another 5 scholarships for students from Caribbean and Latin American countries, each worth Can\$10,000 per year.

University of British Columbia Financial Awards

[UBC](#) invites each international school to nominate one student for their [Financial Awards for International Students](#). Two kinds of award are available and up to 3 students may be offered each award: for 2003 the Global Citizen of Tomorrow Award worth Can\$27,000 per year and the International Leader of Tomorrow Award worth from \$12,000 to \$20,000 per year. Both are renewable for the following 3 years of undergraduate study. A sign-up list for students wanting to be considered for nomination will be posted in January – ask if you do not see the list. The deadline for receipt of the nomination package by UBC is around the middle of March each year.

University of Toronto

While [UT](#) has few scholarship opportunities for most non-Canadians, there are several valuable scholarships for Hong Kong students. Most of these scholarships are financially supported by UT alumni living in Hong Kong, hence their restriction to HK students. Note that the Lee Shau-Keel Scholarship described below is available to students of any nationality residing in Hong Kong – one requirement is that the student return to live and work in HK after studying at UT so this would not be available in general to our overseas students.

All of these scholarships allow the successful students to apply for free (no application fee) to UT. If you are certain that you could not afford to attend UT without one of these scholarships then save the application fee and apply if you win the scholarship.

The size of UT (~50,000 students) and its popularity in Hong Kong has justified a full-time office in Hong Kong, the [University of Toronto \(Hong Kong\) Foundation](#). Refer to its the web page for current details and application forms. The following was copied from this web page in January 2006.

University of Toronto (Hong Kong) Foundation 2006/07 Scholarship Application Information

Since 1995, the University of Toronto (Hong Kong) Foundation Limited has been creating and offering scholarships for exceptional undergraduate students from Hong Kong with financial need to attend the University of Toronto. Alumni and friends of the University living in Hong Kong and the University of Toronto generously provide support for these scholarships. These scholarships are administered by the Foundation in Hong Kong:

Dr. Cheng Yu-Tung Scholarships

Dr. Cheng Yu-Tung generously endowed this scholarship program. The value of this award for the academic year is CDN\$13,000, renewable annually to complete an honours undergraduate degree in four years in any discipline. There are three scholarships available for the academic year 2005/06.

Fung Yiu King Memorial Commerce Scholarship

Dr. Patrick Y.B. Fung and family generously endowed this scholarship. The value of the award is CDN\$13,500 per annum, renewable annually to complete an honours undergraduate degree in four years. This scholarship is for a student pursuing commerce studies. There is one scholarship available for the academic year 2005/06.

Dr. Lee Shau-Kee Scholarships

Details to be confirmed

[email dated 20 Jan 2006 confirms this scholarship now used for direct entry to UT's Engineering Science programme. Worth maximum HK\$100,000 per year for 4 years.]

University of Toronto (Hong Kong) Foundation Scholarship

This scholarship is available to students pursuing any undergraduate program at the University of Toronto. The value of this scholarship is from CDN\$21,000 to CDN\$24,000 per annum, depending on program, renewable annually to complete an honours undergraduate degree in four years. There is one scholarship for the academic year 2005/06.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

- Payment of the award is conditional on full-time registration at the University of Toronto in September 2006.
- Renewal each year is based on satisfactory academic performance in the preceding year, and continued registration as a full-time student.
- Scholarships are available for a maximum of 4 years of study towards an honours undergraduate degree. Additional funds are not available for the summer session at the University of Toronto.
- Should a successful candidate withdraw or substantially reduce the course-load, he/she may be required to repay all or part of the award.

General Criteria:

Successful candidates for the Dr. Cheng Yu-Tung Scholarships, Fung Yiu King Memorial Commerce Scholarship, and University of Toronto (Hong Kong) Foundation Scholarship must:

- be a permanent resident of Hong Kong who will return after graduation;
- not have citizenship, landed immigrant status, permanent residency or any other claim to residence in Canada, or any other country or territory outside of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region;
- have an English proficiency equivalent to TOEFL paper-based score of 600 (combined with a TWE of 5.0), TOEFL computer-based test of 250 (and 5.0 on the Essay) or IELTS overall band of 6.5 (with no individual score under 6.0);
- demonstrate strong family financial need;
- be in the process of completing at least 3 A-levels with distinction (or equivalent);
- have strong personal initiative and community leadership;
- have genuine interest in living abroad and want to enjoy a new cultural experience;
- be able to provide three personal references;
- be committed to developing a career and community service in Hong Kong.

Special note to candidates for the Dr. Cheng Yu-Tung Scholarships, Fung Yiu King Memorial Commerce Scholarship, and University of Toronto (Hong Kong) Foundation Scholarship:

- because these scholarships are intended to assist international students from Hong Kong to meet their costs at the University of Toronto, applicants who have had at any time citizenship, landed immigrant status or any other claim to residency in Canada, or any other country or territory save and except Hong Kong and China, may not apply (such students are normally eligible for other forms of financial support and domestic tuition in Canada and elsewhere);
- those who do not qualify for these scholarships because of their Canadian citizenship or landed immigrant status may be eligible for the Dr. Lee Shau Kee Scholarship;
- once the online application and the required supporting materials are received, the applicant is eligible for all three scholarships and the appropriate scholarship will be assigned, by the selection committee, to the successful applicant based on his/her chosen field of study, academic results and performance at the interview;
- all applicants are required to demonstrate strong family financial need.

Quebec Universities

Note that universities in Quebec (eg [McGill](#)) have substantially reduced fees for students from

Francophone countries – countries that use French as a national language. These fees are lower than those for Canadians from other provinces to study at Quebec universities. While these fee subsidies are not technically scholarships, they do serve the same function of reducing the student's study costs.

University of Alberta

[U Alberta](#) introduced a United World College Scholarship in 2003 valued at 80,000 CAN\$ over the 4 years of the undergraduate degree.

Hong Kong

Introduction

The Hong Kong university system is modeled closely on the UK system with 3-year undergraduate Bachelor degrees. While HK students sitting the HK A level exams may apply through the centralised Joint University Programmes Admission System (JUPAS), all others such as those of you here at LPC must apply individually to each university. In general where admission numbers are restricted for particular courses, universities reserve places for non-JUPAS applicants.

Check the [deadlines for HK](#) universities in the first chapter.

The 3 main universities that LPC students apply to are:

- HKU [University of Hong Kong](#)
- CU [Chinese University](#)
- UST [Hong Kong University of Science and Technology](#)

In the 6 years from 2000 to 2006, 67 LPC students matriculated at these 3 universities. Another 4 matriculated at [City University](#), 2 at the [Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts](#) and 1 at [Baptist University](#). HKU, CU and UST all welcome applications from non-HK students and HKU has an early decision application process starting 2005 with an application deadline in December.

There is considerable information from these universities on file in the Academic Centre and all are readily accessible by public transport.

Scholarships and Financial Aid

While Hong Kong students can apply for needs-based financial aid to study at HK universities (refer to the [Student Financial Assistance Agency web page for local institutions](#)), there are also scholarships available to HK students for study overseas. The following is a brief summary of scholarships available for undergraduate study – check the [Student Financial Assistance Agency](#) website and our Scholarships Database for more details.

Sir Edward Youde Memorial Scholarship	We will only support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students with 7 or more As at HKCEE • students with 6 or more As at HKCEE and predicted grade of 40 or higher • students with 5 or more As at HKCEE and predicted grade of 41 or 42
Jardine Foundation Scholarship	
Prince Philip Scholarship	
Sir Philip Haddon-Cave Scholarship	
William SD Louey Scholarship	
Japanese Government Scholarship – for study in Japan	
Hang Seng Bank Overseas Scholarship – for study at leading US and UK universities	
Rosita Ho Foundation Scholarship for University of Virginia, UC San Diego and UC Berkeley	
Hong Kong Schools Alumni Federation of Southern California Scholarship Foundation – universities in California	
Various scholarships for study at University of Toronto (see section in the Canada chapter)	



Introduction

A major problem with researching US universities is dealing with the vast quantities of information available. Enquiries to a few universities can result in many kg of material being posted to you – much of this we may already have in the Academic Centre or you can readily access it on the internet. Apart from material sourced from the universities themselves, many organisations are in the business of persuading you to use their information. Be selective about what you read, both in consideration of the time that you spend and of the quality of the information.

Thin Fiske

My preference for a simple and thorough introduction to researching the US university application process is the 'thin Fiske', the Fiske Guide To Getting Into The Right College. This is the single most useful book we have for general information about applying to US universities. It provides valuable information on most aspects of researching and applying to US schools and I recommend it as a 'must-read' for anyone applying to US universities.

Thick Fiske

Once you are ready to research particular universities you have a wider range of sources – my preference for a starting point is the Fiske Guide To Colleges. This book provides a 2-3 page overview of each of 300 selective US institutions and includes some major Canadian and UK universities. It is updated annually and by August each year we should have copies of the new edition in the Academic Centre library. I find this guide much more useful than the larger and more comprehensive guides such as Petersons, Princeton Review and Collegeboard Handbook guides which include all 3000 universities and colleges in the US.

ACU

The American Colleges and Universities website (<http://www.acuinfo.com/>) also seems to be a useful place to refer to, and once you've registered to access the site, check out the Information and Advice section.

CollegeBoard International Student Handbook

If you need financial aid then check the [LPC University Database records of scholarship offers](#) to LPC students as well as the College Board International Student Handbook. The latter consists of a table of data on every US university – particularly useful are the numbers of international students, the average international financial aid award and the number of students receiving this aid. Remember to use the first section of the Handbook, which applies to undergraduate students – the second section is for graduate students.

Linden

Linden is a US organisation specialising in tours and college fairs around the world. It has a useful web page about US education at http://www.lindentours.com/int_students/study_in_the_us.shtml. The Linden Tour usually visits Hong Kong in October each year and it might be worth attending if you want to meet with schools that don't usually visit LPC. Most of you will be satisfied by the schools that do visit us.

Credit and advanced placement

High scores for your HL courses might get you credit at some colleges, allowing you to skip the corresponding first year courses. Some colleges will reduce your total credit requirement (ie you complete your degree with fewer courses) while others will not change your total credit requirement (ie same number of courses but at least no repetition of equivalent first year courses).

US Department of State

The US Department of State has a useful web page (<http://educationusa.state.gov/undergrad.htm>) for undergraduate study for international students. It has produced a series of 4 detailed and highly informative guides for international students about study in the US. Booklets 1 and 4 are relevant to you and have been downloaded in PDF format (included in the same folder as this Guide). Click on the links below to read the documents:

[Booklet 1: If you want to study in the United States](#)

[Booklet 4: Getting ready to go: practical information for living and studying in the United States](#)

Booklet 4 can also be downloaded in various languages from the Publications link on the web page above (not sure where Booklet 1 can be found now).

Interviews, application essays, and listing your extracurricular activities

While there is lots of university application advice available on the internet, and much of it should be read with caution, I found the [3 columns](#) by Jay Mathews for the Washington Post to be relevant – they “ring true” for me. The column on interviews is very good.

Resources

Information in Hong Kong

Institute of International Education (Hong Kong), IIE
 General Commercial Building, Room 601
 156-164 Des Voeux Road Central
 Hong Kong
 Tel: 2603 5771

<mailto:iihk@cuhk.edu.hk>
www.iiehongkong.org

Books

Also read the US Department of State guides for international students referred to above.

General advice

- *The Fiske Guide To Getting Into The Right College* – (Sourcebooks, Inc., 1-57071-906-3, HK\$150) – superb guide to researching and applying to US colleges, a ‘must read’.
- *The International Student's Guide to going to College in America* (out of print) – one copy available on loan from me.
- *The Kaplan Parent's Guide to College Admissions* – another useful general guide to researching and applying to US colleges; one copy available on loan from me.

University information (all on the Academic Centre shelves)

- *The Fiske Guide to Colleges* – generally reliable reference to 300 top colleges, the first book I refer to; updated annually and several copies in the Academic Centre.
- *4 Year Colleges* (Peterson's) – reference to more than 2000 colleges
- *The College Board International Student Handbook* – best general resource I have for details of international financial aid, proportion of international students, TOEFL scores, etc
- *College's Which Change Lives – 40 schools you should know about even if you're not a straight A student* – worthwhile reading; highly recommended
- *The Insider's Guide To The Colleges* – review of 300 top US and Canadian universities with a student's perspective

Web sites

Common Application	http://www.commonapp.org/
College Board	http://www.collegeboard.org/
scholarship search for foreign students	http://www.iefaf.org/
US News main college web site	http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/college/cohome.htm
US Yahoo College Search	http://features.yahoo.com/college/search.html
US Princeton Review Online	http://www.review.com/college/

US News Rankings

Rankings for the top universities and colleges are in the Excel spreadsheet titled [US News Rankings 2005](#) (in R:\Universities\Useful univ documents). The spreadsheet contains 2 worksheets, one for universities and one for colleges – select using the tabs at the bottom of the screen. Printouts are posted in the Academic Centre.

Terminology

University and College

While most other countries just use the name university for institutions offering the undergraduate Bachelor degree programme, US *schools* are typically classified as **universities** (usually offer research and both 4-year undergraduate as well as graduate study) or **colleges** (only offer the 4-year undergraduate degree programmes- although there is no post-graduate research, some colleges do offer excellent research opportunities). Also some **institutes** offer Bachelor degrees – eg MIT, Caltech. Some universities offer their undergraduate programmes within colleges – eg Cornell University has 7 undergraduate colleges (Arts and Sciences, Engineering, etc). In this document I will use the words ‘college’ and ‘university’ interchangeably.

Liberal Arts and Pre-Professional

Most colleges offer a *liberal arts* programme, which includes compulsory breadth with a focus on your chosen major. This is similar to the IB Diploma programme where you study across 5 disciplines and “major” in 3 Higher Level subjects. Some professions require specialised training at the undergraduate level to prepare for a graduate programme. These *pre-professional* programmes are not available at all colleges. Refer to the Fiske books for recommendations for various pre-professional programmes.

Scholarships and Financial Aid

1. In the US ‘scholarships’ usually refer to **merit scholarships** – awarded for excellence in some area, eg academic, sports, music. Merit scholarships are not usually dependent upon the financial means of the student.
2. Financial aid is need-based money provided to help a student without the financial means to attend the university. All US universities have FA for US citizens but much fewer have FA for international students, and the budget they have for international FA is much smaller than for domestic FA (although the Davis Incentive Grant has increased this considerably). A few colleges treat Canadians as domestic for FA purposes.

Need-blind

Most universities have separate offices for admissions and for financial aid, each dealing with the relevant applications. When a university states that it is need-blind, it means that each of these 2 offices makes its decisions without consulting the other – ie a student might get an offer of admission but no offer of financial aid. One rationale for this is that a student may be able to use the admission offer to raise funds or sponsorship for the university costs (this happened in 2002 with an LPC student who had an offer from Cornell but no financial aid).

Many universities state that they are need-blind but unless it states this specifically for international students you should probably assume that they are only need-blind for domestic students and ‘need-aware’ for others. If the university is not need-blind then it will usually only make an admission offer if it is also prepared to offer financial aid. One effect of this is that many students receive rejections because the universities could not afford them and not because the universities did not want them. You should be aware that if you apply for financial aid to universities which are not need-blind when you do not need it, you risk a rejection on financial grounds.

Applications

You can get application forms by:

- requesting from the university – Admissions Office email addresses are available on the university web sites and in their catalogues in the Academic Centre
- downloading from the university's web site – many universities provide this option
- completing the form online at the university's web site
- using the Common Application form if the university is a member of this system (see [below](#))

Your Application should be submitted with either the application fee or a request for a fee waiver (which will only be considered by the university if it is accompanied by a supporting letter from me). I am only prepared to write a letter supporting your request for a fee waiver if I believe the fee would cause financial hardship to your family – you need to discuss with me.

Early Decision, Early Action and Regular Decision

Some US colleges offer Early Decision (ED) or Early Action (EA) applications. If you apply for Early Decision you commit to attend that college if it offers you a place – ie you can only apply ED to one college and you must be certain that that college is your first choice. Many US colleges have ED application deadlines in October or November (some can be as early as Oct 1) and will give you a decision several weeks later, often before the Christmas break. Emily has posted the deadlines for submitting the School Report form to her for ED applications.

Some advantages of a successful ED application:

- You will know where you are going by the beginning of the 2nd semester
- You will save time by not applying to other universities
- You might have a small advantage over Regular Decision applicants
- You avoid the uncertainty of waiting until March/April for decisions

**I require that you discuss with me first any plans you have for
an Early Decision application**

Components of the US Application for Undergraduate Admission

US university applications **usually** require 4 parts:

1. your application (completed by you)
 2. 2 teacher evaluations
 3. School Report (completed by me and including your testimonial and transcript)
 4. Mid-Year Report
- (+ a financial aid application, ISFAA, if needed).

The **LPC transcript** has 3 sets of grades:

- May 1st year Achievement Grades
- 1st semester 2nd year Achievement Grades (either Oct or Nov, whichever is most recent)
- 1st semester 2nd year Predicted Grades (either Oct or Nov, whichever is most recent)

We will **always** use your most recent predicted grades.

We do not send effort grades on the transcript.

Transcript from your previous school

Nearly all US universities require original transcripts (or a photocopy which has been chopped and signed by Emily to certify it is genuine) covering your final 4 years of high school – ie 2 years at LPC and 2 years at your previous school. If your previous transcript is not in English you must have it translated. The easiest way is probably for you to translate the key points and ask a suitable LPC teacher or your language tutor to sign on the transcript confirming the translation is accurate and attach a brief note on LPC letterhead stating who they are.

LPC Testimonials

All US applications processed through the office (ie given to Emily) will be sent with the LPC testimonial as a part of the School Report. Read the [relevant section](#) in the General University Information chapter.

School Report Form

On the university's form or Common Application form complete your name and address details and submit to Emily (no need to enter your subject as these will be shown on the transcript – just write “see attached”).

Mid-year Report

In most cases the grades we provide in the School Report (the LPC grades in late November) are not updated by the time Mid-year Reports are required by universities. Our next grades would be early March following Project Week. Check the deadline for me to submit the Mid-year Report. If it is mid-March or later, then submit the form to Emily. If the deadline is earlier then leave it. The only exception is if you are applying Early Decision – submit that Mid-year Report to Emily. If you are not sure, ask me.

Teacher Evaluations

Most applications require teacher recommendations (usually 2). Some specify which subject teachers for the recommendation (eg English teacher or a Science teacher). For US universities in **ALL** cases use the LPC blue Teacher Evaluation forms in the shelves in the Academic Centre.

Do everything you can to make the teacher's job easier:

- a. ask the teacher at least 2 weeks (ideally 4 or more weeks) before the posting deadline. The more time you give the teacher, the more likely they are to say ‘yes’ and the more time they will have to write your recommendation carefully.
- b. provide each teacher with:
 - one copy of the blue LPC Teacher Evaluation form with your details completed at the top
 - a stamped addressed envelope for each college you want the evaluation sent to (if you want to send the complete application with School Report, teacher evaluations and your application together, just give them an addressed envelope and ask them to return to Emily)
 - a brief summary of your goals, interests and extracurricular experiences within Li Po Chun, and any important ones previously – perhaps use a copy of your Student Information form

The Common Application Form

The Common Application is a single application accepted by more than 200 US universities. Copies of the forms and a list of these member universities are in the Academic Centre shelves, and also on the internet at <http://www.commonapp.org/>. The major advantage of using the Common Application is the time saved by completing one form, then photocopying it to send to the various universities you wish to apply to. Even better is completing the Common App online, the method most preferred by all universities. Although you only need to write the one application essay, you might want to alter it slightly or even write a completely different essay for some universities. Some universities have extra forms (“supplements”), which you need to get directly from the university – download from their web site or have them post to you.

The Common Application has 4 sections

1. Application for Undergraduate Admission – you complete all parts
2. School Report – complete your details then give to Emily
3. Midyear Report – not needed for us unless you are applying Early Decision or Early Action
4. 2x Teacher Evaluation – use the blue LPC form (Academic Centre shelves). See the [Teacher Evaluations](#) section above for advice on requesting the evaluations.

Be sure to complete any supplements required by individual universities.

You have a choice of 3 ways to complete the Common Application

- a. Complete the paper copy by hand, photocopy once for each university, then post to the universities – copies of blank forms are in the Academic Centre shelves
- b. Complete the form online, then print off and post to universities
- c. Complete the form online, then send electronically
 - print off application and check carefully **BEFORE** pressing send
 - easier to spot mistakes on a printed copy than on the screen
 - after you have submitted application you can not get it back or make changes
 - can only send amendments by post to the university

Cases a and b – print off the Application Agreement Statement, sign and post it with your application fee or fee waiver letter from me.

The Application Essay

See also [Appendix 6](#) for examples of essays by successful LPC students.

Introduction

The essay is often the only opportunity you have to introduce yourself on a personal basis to the Admissions Officer/Selection Panel. It is your chance to present yourself as an individual who is able to stand out from the rest of the group. Also, like when we meet a person for the first time, these first impressions tend to stay with us. The essay is one of the first impressions that will be gained of you and much may depend on how this is viewed.

Be aware of the cultural differences that exist between different English-speaking countries. In specific terms, for instance consider the differences between applications going to universities in the United States and the United Kingdom.

How to go about preparing and writing the essay:

- Read "Some Tips on Writing Your Essay" below.
- Review the sample essays below
- Discuss with peers, teachers, parents

Write one essay and adapt it for different applications

You can spend a tremendous amount of time redrafting and polishing essays for different applications. An efficient approach is, where possible, to produce one high quality essay then adapt it for your different applications. Even where you can submit the same essay to different universities (eg for the Common Application) you can improve it significantly by making small modifications dedicated to each university – even reference to the university's name in a few places will suggest that you have not just sent them a recycled essay that has also gone to several other places.

How to avoid being boring ...

- Give specific personal examples rather than generalisations, eg:
 - "I enjoy working with children ..."
 - "When Suburiyam told me about how he had escaped from Vietnam in a fifteen-foot

fishing boat with thirty ..."

- Be creative – employ divergent thinking ...
- See Sample Essay 1. Notice the use of the "formula" ...
- See Essay 2. Notice the use of the metaphor and its personal nature.
- See Essay 3 and 4 for further illustrations of the good, the bad and the ugly.

Refer also to the article [Tips for writing your College application essay](#) produced by the [Associated Colleges of the Midwest](#) (also on the Guide to College Planning link on this ACM website – other useful information here).

Books

On Writing the College Application Essay The College Application Essay (College Board)	(both on loan from me)
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Purposes of the application essay

1. The essay gives you a chance to tell the admissions committee more about yourself and your character than they can find out from your grades, scores, and recommendations.
2. The essay gives you an opportunity to tell the admissions committee something special about yourself, something which makes you different from all the other applicants.
3. If your transcripts show some weakness, for example if you had a problem in a particular class or on an examination, you can use the essay to explain the problem and highlight your other strengths.
4. The essay gives the college a good example of your writing ability.
5. If your application is a "borderline case", the essay can help the admissions committee make a final decision. It can be used to determine your seriousness (or laziness).

Some Tips on Writing Your Essay

Do

- Read the question carefully and take time to think about the topic.
- Make sure you answer the question that is asked.
- Discuss the question with your parents, friends, or teachers.
- Treat the short answer questions seriously, too. For questions that ask you to explain your involvement in your extracurricular activities, choose the few activities that you spent the most time participating in and tell what they meant to you.
- Spend time, over several days, thinking about the question and preparing to write.
- Make an outline and organise what you want to say.
- Write a first draft.
- Use a simple style and be concise. Using language that you are comfortable with will make it easier for your ideas to be understood.
- Have someone else read and give their opinion about your first draft.
- Revise and edit your essay.
- Write or type your final draft neatly.
- Proofread your essay.

Don't

- *Do not just repeat information about yourself that you have written elsewhere in your application.*
- *Do not give details about or compliment the college. The admissions committee wants to know about you, not the school.*
- *Do not use the same essay for different college applications.*
- *Do not write an essay about something you do not know about.*
- *Do not try to impress the admissions committee by using difficult language that you may not be able to use correctly. It is more important to express yourself clearly, so it is fine to use simple language that you easily understand.*

- *Do not have someone else write your essay. The admissions committee will usually be able to tell, and if they find out, you may be disqualified.*

For more information about writing your application essay, consult:

- In the LPC library and at the Institute of International Education
- Guide to College Admissions – Peterson's
- Writing Your Application Essay – The College Board
- From my office:
 - On Writing the College Application Essay – Harry Bauld
 - The College Application Essay – The College Board

Some Sample Essay Questions

1. Please provide us with autobiographical information and an explanation of your educational objectives.
2. Choose one memorable or significant hour from your life that gives us a better understanding of who you are and describe it in detail.
3. Describe one of your most humorous or embarrassing experiences.
4. What are your educational and career objectives and how will this university help you achieve them?
5. Why have you chosen your field of study and how will you use your education in your home country?
6. Describe some event in your life that you feel has shaped your development or taught you some lessons.
7. Describe an aspect of your life in your hometown in the year 2084.
8. If you could meet and talk with someone who is not alive today, who would you meet and what would you talk with him about?
9. Briefly describe the factors that have influenced your interest in studying your major, giving specific attention to experiences or ideas that have led you to choose this course of study.
10. Make a statement regarding your educational objectives. (University of Wisconsin-Madison)
11. Choose one memorable or significant hour from your life that gives us a better understanding of who you are. Describe it in detail. (Washington University)
12. A hero is defined as someone demonstrating brave deeds and noble qualities. Can you point to an individual whom you would classify as a contemporary hero? What characteristics of this person are most noteworthy? Your choice need not be widely recognised. (Boston College)
13. Please indicate, in your own words, why you would like to study in the United States, and in particular, why you would like to study at RIT. Additionally, indicate why you have selected your intended field of study, and how this study will relate to your career plans. (Rochester Institute of Technology)
14. For some prognosticators the end of the world was in sight by the year 1000. How do you foresee your world of 2020? (or) What is your favourite newspaper cartoon or comic strip? Explain. (Dickinson College)

15. Describe in detail some special interest, experience or achievement. (or) Discuss a person you've met or known who has had a significant influence on you. (or) What idea has most influenced your life? In what ways? (Brandeis University)
16. Explain why one of the best days of your life has had continuing importance to you as a young adult. (Northwestern University)
17. What single adjective do you think would be most frequently used to describe you by those who know you best? Briefly explain. (Stanford)
18. What has been the most significant historical, social, or political event or development in your region of the world during the past ten years and why? (Boston University)
19. In addition to the information form, what other factors would you like the Board of Admissions to consider in evaluating your candidacy. Feel free to include some of your important accomplishments, your goals, or your ideas about education. (Boston University)
20. What factors let you to seek an education outside your native country? (Boston University)
21. Imagine you are writing your autobiography. Please share chapter 7 with the Board of Admissions. (Mount Holyoke College)
22. Indicate a person who has had a significant influence on you, and describe that influence.
23. Please write an essay about one of the topics listed below (From the "Common Application").
 - Evaluate a significant experience or achievement that has special meaning to you.
 - Discuss some issue of personal, local, or national concern and its importance to you.

Sample Essays A

Essay 1 by Stacey Hau Guih Ng

I had never thought of living in another place other than Hong Kong when I was a kid. I still remember the day my parents told me that we will move to Toronto. Since I had never been to Toronto before, I really worried about how I would adjust to the differences. However, once I did I began to like the style of living in Toronto. In the first few weeks, I could not get use to speaking English, I was just like a mute. So that, my parents forced me to go to summer school, and fortunately it improved my spoken English.

The North American educational system gives more freedom to students, in comparison to the British system in Hong Kong which gives students so much pressure. The system in Hong Kong really makes it impossible for students to get into university. Also, the teachers in North America is so much nicer and more patient than those in Hong Kong. I think this is the main reason that makes me want to study out of my home country.

The environment in North America is so much nicer than Hong Kong. Since Hong Kong is such a small city, and it has a population of seven million, the problems of lack of housing and pollution is serious. May factories dump their waste in to the harbour which has polluted the water badly. Also, the exhaust gases from taxis, buses, and trucks created a grey layer in the sky. My problem is that I suffer when I breathe the dirty air, because I have an allergy to the dust in the air. In North America, the air is cleaner which makes me feel more refreshed, and have a better mood to study.

Another reason that makes me want to study in North America is that I can learn about another culture other than Chinese or Asian culture. I can learn more about different behaviour of different kinds of people, and also to see and absorb more matters when encounter different situations.

In conclusion, I would like to say that I really like North America. It will be the best if I can study in Sleepy Hollow because it is a city that I have not been live in before, and I look forward to get some important experiences and adventures in the city.

Comments

Was Stacey too tired when she sat down to write her essay, or was she just having a bad day? Beside her difficulties with English grammar, Stacey's big problem is her negative tone. She isn't very positive about living in Hong Kong, why should it be any better in Sleepy Hollow where she has never lived before?

Essay 2 by Geoffrey Bin Go Yan

In my opinion, I think that it is very difficult for one to write about oneself. One has to try to be totally unbiased and absolutely objective. It is also very hard not to sound proud when one is writing about one's merits and I don't think anyone really likes to mention his/her drawbacks. However, I should try to be as totally objectives as I can and I hope that you will forgive me if I fail in the aim.

How much could I tell you about my character in a few hundred words? Not a lot probably, but I will try my best.

In the field of extra-curricular activities, I do a few racquet sports, particularly badminton, squash and tennis. In badminton, I am presently the captain of the 1st Badminton team in Green Ivy College (a secondary private school). I have just acquired my full colons (a way in which the school shows that a particular boy has achieved the highest standard that the school expects is capable of any student). In squash, I play in the first five and I have got my half-colors (a standard below the above) and hope to be both captain and to get my full colons next year.

Tennis is the Summer equivalent of badminton. I am presently on the 1st team and hope to get my full colons in the near future.

I like to think that I am sociable, but this is something which only the rest of the year could tell you. (Hopefully, they agree with me!) I like to think that I am generous, charitable and considerate (but then there is no way I could convince you that I was such).

I would like to complete a degree in Business Management during my study in Economax University and then to start putting theory into practice by learning from my father in his present company.

I hope that I have not sounded too proud and would be very grateful if you would forgive me if I have. Thank you.

Comments:

Geoffrey who? This young man acknowledges a common problem. It is difficult to write about oneself. Unfortunately, he is so worried about sounding boastful that he never really tells us much about himself. He spends a lot of time using flowery language. The Admissions Committee, however, really wants to know more about his sports activities. How has he learned from them? Is there a specific event in Geoffrey's sporting career that is particularly memorable and shows (rather than tells) how good he is?

Essay 3 by Thomas Ying Gwo Tsai

I have lived outside of my country, United Republic of Atlantis, for most of my life. I have been in Hong Kong for about eighteen years. I did most of my growing up and learning on this small island in the South China Sea. Therefore, it seems suitable to write a piece on the place I have come to love during these years.

Hong Kong, a British Colony, is located on a small peninsula on the southeastern tip of China. A short distance of water separates the "Kowloon" peninsula from Hong Kong Island. This stretch of water known as the "fragrant Harbour" is one of the busiest sea ports in the world. The population is about 5.7 million, with 98% of the people being Chinese. The mood here is very fast paced and businesslike. New office buildings are popping up every day, with some just inches from each other. Space seems to be the rare luxury in Hong Kong. There is only so much you can build on a 1070sq Km area.

With no many buildings accommodating so may people, there tends to be a very intricate street plan for Hong Kong. Small alley ways lead to major streets where neon signs of every colour burn magnificently twisted amongst each other competing for visibility. Mazelike side streets are strewn with shops catering to the nearby residents. The central business district of Hong Kong (appropriately named "Central"), is the financial centre of Hong Kong. Banks along side each other try to out do each other in architecture or height. Currently, the tallest building in Hong Kong is Central Plaza, with 78 stories. The Bank of China building comes a close second with 74 stories. Straight ahead hard edged business strategy, mixed in with Chinese superstition, values, status symbols, and traditions, leads even the western businesses in Hong Kong pay heed to may of the superstitious traditions in the Chinese folklore.

I can only hope that when the time comes to leave Hong Kong, I will be better prepared, because of my stay here, to deal with life on a more understanding basis. My brief stays in Nepal, Hawaii and Taiwan, have led me to believe that Hong Kong is in fact a very unique place.

With China's repossession of Hong Kong in 1997 drawing closer, I can tell that life here will never be the same. No one is really certain what will happen. The newly appointed governor, Mr Chris Patten, has been aggressive in negotiations with the Mainland Chinese. This has attracted some criticism from the press and various China watchdogs. By this time, I hope to be already studying in the States. I wish to attend your film program in the future. The city of Boston sounds very exciting. Rich with music and the arts, a place where I'm sure I could study in an all college environment and also have access to quality education and state-of-art facilities Veritas University provides for its students.

Comments:

This essay is fairly well written until one comes to the last very long and incomplete sentence. It leaves a poor impression. But what else is wrong? Doesn't this essay sound like something written by the Hong Kong Tourist Association? The only thing the Admissions Committee learns about Thomas Ying Gwo Yan is that he has travelled in Asia. He says he wants to attend the film program, but the essay does not address future plans, or how living in Hong Kong has influenced his decision. there really isn't anything personal about his essay at all.

Essay 4 by Charity Dai Fa Li

When I was in Secondary 4, a very special thing happened. The grandmother of my friend, Jackie, has Alzheimer's disease. One day Jackie's grandmother disappeared. This was reported to the police, but nothing happened. Jackie was very upset and told us what happened. We were all willing to help. We sat together to discuss what we were going to do to help. Then, we proceeded separately. Some of us went to the newspaper office and radio stations to place an advertisement for a missing person. A few boys even went to Macau over the weekend because Jackie's father works there.

A few days later, someone responded to our advertisement in the newspaper and telephoned Jackie to tell her that an old lady was seen wondering in the Tsim Sha Tsui area. Jackie immediately called us for help. After three hours of searching, we finally found her grandmother. It was the happiest day of my life.

I was very enthusiastic in helping Jackie because I believe we should not be selfish. Everyone is bound to go through misery and we all need help sometimes. Therefore, we all should be concerned with people and offer our help when we are able.

For years, I was a girl whose main concerns were to get good grades and to look good. However, after going through this incident I realised that helping others is the most joyful and meaningful thing in the world. Therefore, I have become more involved in charity and voluntary work. Now, I participate actively in Red Cross Blood Donation Projects, and other projects to raise donations for people in the Third World. Last Christmas, I helped my school distribute toys to children in a Vietnamese refugee camp.

Through these projects, I also learned the importance of leadership and organisational skills. I believe all of us are basically kind and generous, but it often takes someone to launch, organise, and participate in projects before the energy to do good can be properly channelled.

Comments:

Charity has used a specific event from her life to demonstrate how she has changed over time and the essay works very well. It is short and to the point, and Charity uses simple sentences, which are quite effective. Charity's essay isn't perfect. She ends too abruptly and could have fleshed her writing out a bit more to make a truly great essay. On the whole, however, the Admissions Committee has learned something important about Charity and would welcome her positive outlook on life and her proven leadership and organisational skills.

Sample Essays B – Colby and Grinnell rate these 10 essays by recent UWC applicants as excellent

1 Briefly discuss your reasons for applying to Colby

Science confuses. It provokes. Never failing to create controversy within society, it pushes barriers, forces paradigm shifts and is actively engaged in the quest for knowledge. Hungry for this knowledge of the universe, and the people within it, I have made science my passion and vessel for acquiring this knowledge. I was first attracted to Colby due to its strong scientific program and the emphasis placed on opportunity for exploration and serious research into areas of academic interest. The "Nature versus Nurture" debate has fascinated me, and I strongly believe that the environment has a greater effect on the individual than genetics. Steven Pinker's "The Blank Slate" allowed me to further explore this potentially radical point of view. His explanation of homosexuality in terms of cultural influence particularly interested me, and although I was not totally convinced that the propensity towards homosexuality is "caused" by cultural factors, it has certainly forced me to reconsider my own viewpoint regarding this age-long debate.

2 Personal Statement

One week. It had the potential to change my whole perspective on life. I am no great adventurer, no Junko Tabei or Valentina Tereshkova. I do not have their skills or expertise in mountaineering and space adventure respectively, but I believe I possess the same passion, determination and drive to succeed. So, my best friend and I, armed with large backpacks, copious amounts of insect repellent and a travel guide, waved goodbye to our parents, and set off for Cambodia during the Summer break.

We were going to visit Lavalla School in Phnom Penh; a primary school for children with physical disabilities, ranging from children with injuries from land mine accidents to those with congenital disabilities. For four years I have been part of the Global Concern which supports this school. I had earlier visited the school during 'Project Week'. To have the opportunity to return to this project filled me with excitement and anticipation. We independently booked all our tickets and for three months before the trip we took lessons in Khmer, and researched many ways of teaching English to children.

Ignoring the growing feeling of anxiety in my stomach, I looked out the window of the speeding jeep, the dust hitting the side of the vehicle rather viciously. Spotting the familiar gate of Lavalla School, I would like to say all apprehension disappeared, but it only intensified! When our jeep pulled up at the school, familiar faces ran up to the vehicle, and warmly welcomed us to their home. We were instantly engulfed in the atmosphere of excitement; this was the week that the Year Six pupils were graduating from Lavalla, and the Graduation Ceremony was to be followed with a trip to Sihanoukville, a seaside town.

On the third day, the Year Six pupils graduated from the school. They proudly marched onto the makeshift stage to the tune of 'Love is all around' the children with prostheses pushing those in wheelchairs. The parents, ex-students and friends in the audience looked on with pride, they all knew how hard it had been for these children to get to this point. They come from some of the poorest parts of Cambodia, yet what they have achieved is amazing. Seeing the year six pupils of Lavalla school graduate gave me increased motivation to passionately pursue what I want in life. I do not pity these students; I respect them for their drive and motivation. Where others would fall, thrive.

The next day, twenty students, four teachers and the two of us, piled onto a very old bus meant for about twelve people. The five hour trip to Sihanoukville was filled with excited singing, sometimes, alternating to ear-drum blowing screeching from the energized children, only interrupted by the bumps from the many pot holes found along Cambodia's notorious roads. These children had never traveled anywhere for holiday, let alone to the sea, and their excitement was obvious. When we arrived at the beach, it was quite difficult to help all of them off the bus, but the transformation once they jumped into the sea was amazing. Children with no limbs were floating around a rubber tube with the waves crashing down on them. Boys with only one leg started playing football, tackling each other with as much force and agility as many able bodied people do. That night we all stayed at a local guesthouse, and the children stayed up all night talking and laughing. It reminded me of my own sister, and how she stays up till all hours just chatting to all her friends when she has sleepovers. They are no different from us.

Looking back I am stuck with awe; we were two girls embarking on a potentially dangerous trip. I explored a totally foreign country, traveled on treacherous roads and perhaps most worrying for some, opened up to and trusted complete strangers. This experience didn't just have a momentary effect upon me. To the students of Lavalla School, perhaps we were just two more faces in the sea of volunteers who pass by, but for me it was an opportunity to experience life outside my comfort zone and immerse myself fully in a culture and lifestyle different to my own.

3 Short Answer: Extracurricular, personal and work experience

May my lips be a shield; may my tongue be a spear; may my words be flying daggers and my thoughts be the guide, leading me through the battlefield of arguments. Chinese debate means most to me only because it witnessed an era of rapid development in my life, it has been the cause of it itself. Confronting opponents and cooperating with teammates, I have acquired effective communication skills, critical and logical thinking and astuteness when meeting an emergency. I have come to understand the importance of team spirit and appreciate the art of speech. The most significant lesson that Chinese debate gave me is that the pursuit of truth can only be attained through constant questioning and answering, just as debaters interact among themselves and with the floor. This spirit penetrates into every aspect of my life. I would certainly assist me to further my intellectual exploration.

4 Personal Statement

It started with a script. It ended with a story, not just of 'Stolen' by Jane Harrison but our journey through the creative process that had a life of its own and a transformed existence. I stood on stage when it was over thinking: In this moment I am who I try want to be. Two months earlier when the offer had been made to direct the theatre class's major performance a certain hesitation talk hold of me. Could I do it? The enormity of it was overwhelming. However, it was the opportunity of a lifetime and had to be taken care for. It only took two months, eight weeks, to transform my life. If I could have seen the road that was about to be treaded I would have though twice, but still ultimately made the same decision. It is when I look back that the instances of enlightenment become special and the times of hardship even more so. They have defined who I am better than I ever could.

It was everything, at once. A semi-organized chaos of twenty people. It was learning in a hurry: instincts in rehearsals are often invaluable. It was hoping for the best: constantly worrying about choices. It was searching for a soul: of the characters and my own. A world contained but always expanding. In this whirlwind the figure of an overworked co-director was standing in the middle, determined to make this happen. The focus was hard to keep and I learned that sometimes, it is better to let go momentarily, and then, re-focus. With a small budget but grand ideas that art of compromise become one of the hardest lessons. There is a fine line between accepting limitation and to settle for less.

Catastrophe hits the production but ends up morphing into bizarre luck for myself. I have to take one of the roles. The extraordinary chance to access this new world from two different aspects; The Director's and the actors. Digging so deep into the human psyche through Stanislavsk's method was absolutely terrifying but essential, and world it. The birth of individuals that sprung from the play's pages created a separate world, one that we had to master. When entering that universe all else was forgotten. Standing on the edge of fiction and real life blurred the difference between the two.

Limbo was the state. A constant swinging between hope and despair. Balance was a concept that was wished for and was obtained but not without sacrifices. Human communication and trust were the key to everything. They not only underpinned the driving force of the production but also unlocked the path to my sanity and salvation. Like the play the feeling of teamwork started out as something small and undefined but as we progressed through learning, helping and trusting each other it transformed into something larger than life. The answer to my earlier question became crystal clear. I could never have done it. We did it.

5 A meaningful extracurricular activity

The UWC Peace CD Project

February 15th 2003. The day of the famous worldwide protest against impending war on Iraq. A busload of Armand Hammer United World College students traveled to Santa Fe, New Mexico. There they would participate in one for the largest international protests in history, chanting peace slogans and singing songs in solidarity with thousands of others across the world. Unfortunately, I was not one of them. Although I had signed up for the demonstration, and had helped paint oversized peace signs, I overslept that morning. Unlike my protest placards, I had missed the bus to Santa Fe.

When I eventually woke up, I was filled with guilt. I had wanted to be apart of the demonstration. I had wanted to voice my dissent concerning the invasion of Iraq, and saw the protest as a way to do so. That afternoon, I turned to the piano to vent my frustration. By nightfall, I had written “Goodbye” – a song about the anguish experienced by the civilians caught in the cross-fire between two warring sides. Sitting alone in a worn Baldwin piano bench, I wondered where I should go from there. I had composed a song about the war – what if I could motivate others to do likewise? What if we could share an anti-war message with others through our music, and spread awareness and concern about the situation in Iraq? What if I could think of a tangible way to make a difference in Iraq, through the intangibles of music and lyrics? Bit by bit, an idea germinated: I would start a UWC Peace CD – a music project that would eventually spin 5 countries and raise funds for CARE’s humanitarian work in Iraq.

An informal school concert was scheduled a few weeks later. At the concert, I nervously performed the song with a friend, and announced my intention to launch a “UCW Peace CD Project.” We would compile original peace songs onto a CD to be sold to raise funds in aid of Iraqi civilians. We encouraged students to come up with songs or poetry confronting the issue of war, and spent the next month drafting a formal business proposal for the project, holding meetings, looking for the best organization to raise the funds for sourcing for the nearest recording studio that would give us discounted rates, and researching the best possible ways to carry out professional CD duplication.

I sent out persistent appeals to the 10 UWCs around the world, asking for contributions from their students, following up on these appeals with personal telephone calls, trying to convince students and teachers miles and miles away of the project’s potential. Perseverance paid off, and I managed to enlist the support of 3 other UWCs. The project become international, with all those involved working across time zones, overcoming the barriers of physical distance to collaborate for a common cause. We exchanged tips on engaging professional recording studios, recruiting committee members, and getting funding from individual school administrations. The final mastering of the CD was done in Hong Kong, with the song files distributed via secure servers, and copies of the master CD mailed to all the UWCs involved. The final product: an album of 14 tracks, entitled “Breaking Waves”. By the end of May 2003, the CD had been released in Norway, India, Canada, Hong Kong and the USA, sold at \$10 each.

To date, the UWC Peace CD Project has raised more than USD\$1,000 for CARE. More than just 14 songs on a platter, it is reaching many beyond the UWC community: via www.peacecd.org (part of a fundraising ‘Blogathon’), and SoundCrack, a concert we organized in conjunction with the local Las Vegas and Santa Fe communities. In Spring 2004, we intend to produce a second album addressing the issue of HIV/AIDS along with a week-long tour in March 2004 that will consist of a moving concert and presentation HIV.

I have learnt and continue to learn from the Peace CD Project in many ways. It has allowed me to realize that everyone has skills to contribute, whether artistic or organizational. More than other inter-UWC collaborations in recent memory, the project has fostered close ties among a substantial cross section of UWC students continents apart, and paved the way for many other inter-UWC projects. For me personally, especially after the downfall of the once-successful organization I had founded in

Singapore, Musicweed, the project has reinforced my confidence in my ability to organize large-scale projects that use artistic expression with a meaningful message on a world issue. Perhaps most pleasantly, I have been blessed in this project with trustworthy and trusting colleagues and friends – some halfway across the world.

6 Personal Statement: *Discuss your ambitions, and how you work to achieve them*

For me that was a day I will not forget for a long time. I was fascinated by the way they worked; how they opened his chest, the tools they used, and the way they kept him sleeping throughout the process. I stood above, in a place where they cannot see me. I watched every move they made and listened to every word they said. I could see the gravity on their sweaty faces. Their hands moved so fast as if it was independent from their bodies. Every one of them had a part to do and did it well. It was clear that they have been doing this job for a long time. Nonetheless, I could still see, through their masks, glimpses of passion as if it was the first time they do it. “Yes that’s it. This is what I want to do” I whispered to myself not to disturb the magic of the moment.

Other than being sick that was my first medical encounter; an open heart surgery one of my relatives invited me to attend. I grew up in a society where people think highly of a doctor for many reasons, his noble intentions, great importance and mostly his high income. This attitude caused many high school graduates in my country to follow medicine in university despite their lack of interest. For as long as I can remember this situation has always angered me. I believe that a good doctor is one who is skillful in heart and mind not any less than in hands.

From experience I know that a successful doctor should acquire a smooth ability to deal with other people. In order to develop my abilities in this field I engaged in several extracurricular activities where I had the opportunity to come in contact with the public. Last summer I did volunteer work at The King Hussein Hospital for Cancer. I was located at the children section; I played with them and taught them English. Furthermore, I had the chance to meet their families and know how they felt about the situation. This year I joined a newly founded service called Greenagers (Eco-Campaigners). It is basically an environmental awareness group directly associated with the international organization “Greenpeace”. During this service the group and I organize environmental campaigns. We raise the public awareness and direct the people’s voice towards the government for it to legislate for the good of the environment. This service enriched my ability to communicate with people, and convey my ideas efficiently.

In the past two years I have been receiving a high quality international education. It gave me the chance to improve my knowledge, personality and leadership. Living in a school where English is the spoken language prepared me well to follow my study in the United States without hindrance. For me it is important that I continue my International education and have the chance to improve my academic, extracurricular and athletic abilities altogether. With rich social involvement and rigorous academic programs I believe studying in the United States will clear the way for me to become a successful doctor. Just as I always imagined myself.

7 Personal Statement

”Go for it and succeed. Nothing is impossible under the sun.” My father’s maxim.

As a child born in a very poor African family, he could not see meaning in his life as he thought it is only the rich who can change the world. My father said to me, “I learnt how to endure hardships, working hard to change one’s life as well as abstaining from those things that can make one to fail in life.”

Growing in a very poor family, my father had lots of problems: shortage of food, poor quality clothes, and having to walk on foot about ten miles to go to school. Being the only child left living at home with

his parents, he had to work hard to help both his mother in domestic chores while at the same time helping his father. Because of these chores, his friends teased him: laughing at him for doing women household tasks like going to fetch water. However, he did not give up but worked hard to improve his life. He told me, "With my academic ability and hard working, I always got higher marks and the higher the marks I got, the more motivated I became. My studying appetite increased every day; I used oil lantern to study even at night, as I had no electricity." He finished primary school and secondary school with higher marks but got selected to join the teaching professional because of the country's policy of fighting against ignorance. Later, he decided to join Police military force in order to defend the country.

To me all these are very encouraging as I can see how he improved his life from his very poor background to a comfortable place in the middle of society. When I was in eight grade he spoke to me, "Three people truly serve the society: teacher, doctor and policeman. In my family we have a businessman, a teacher, and a policeman. While four of my children are still in school, I wish one of them to become a doctor." Ever since he told me this I got influence intellectually to an extent that I developed my interest in medicine.

Now, I realize whatever I have done so far energetically as my service, or action has somehow been related with medicine. He helped me in finding volunteering work in the hospital during my last summer break where I helped disabled elderly and children. It was through this influence, which motivated me in finding volunteering work in hospital in Hong Kong after my summer break. Now I have finished my Hospital Volunteer Infection control Training and have started to work.

It was after participating in these activities I truly got encouragement and felt the hope that I am capable of being a medical doctor. I believe the dreams of my father flourish in my blood. His determination in the face of obstacles serves as a shining example for me. I want to fulfill his aspiration in the modern world to nurture my skills so that I can lend credibility in the eyes of others. I remain eager, hoping to join Grinnell College with the anticipation to gain academic and social education of an international standard that shall enable me to be helpful to my people, country and the world at large.

8 Common Application Topic 6 (Topic of your choice): "What makes you African?"

Imagine a world where the smell of rain in the distance gives rise to the feeling of an inner happiness that is higher than high – where the sweet scent of "Yesterday-today-and-tomorrow" flowers is the first thing you inhale in the morning. Hear the sounds of roosters crowing and mother-goats' reassuring bleats serenade you in the morning. See fertile soils that are the colour of white-powder-dashed sunlight while other soils have hues so red no artist's palette can match them. This is Botswana – a landlocked Sub-Saharan country.

Is it the complexion of my skin that makes me African? My mother fondly describes it as, "Coffee-with a dash of milk." Is it my full lips, that effortlessly spread into a smile in the presence of good humour? Perhaps, it is the colour of my eyes; chocolate brown, like the hills near my village which hint at turning ebony under a winter sunset. Is it the way I dance? When I dance, my body becomes like water. Fluid. I let it move. Time ceases to exist as I communicate to the universe in an ancient language that says, "All is well." When I hear rhythmic music, the urge to dance wells up inside me. Waves of happiness ebb and flow within me, gradually building up into a tidal wave of joy at the center of my soul. Yet, although dancing is an integral part of me, I am not convinced that it is the crucial essence of what makes me African.

"Botho" That's it! "Botho!" makes me African. "Botho" is a term in Setswana (the national language of Botswana) which means, 'living by the principle of respecting oneself enough to respect the people one encounter in one's life'. It is the warmth I exude which hopefully touches all those I meet. It is my effort to create a rapport with a stranger, because I am willing to smile and say, "Hello!" "Botho" cannot be bought nor forged. It comes from a pure place deep within me. It emphasizes the importance of doing the 'smile' but important things such as endeavouring to leave everyone I meet with a smile

on their face, and more importantly in their hearts. At home, I put “Botho” into practice by waking up early in the morning and sweeping the parameters of our yard with the traditional Botswana broom; a custom that involves turning our sand-filled yard into a lively mosaic of intricate lines and designs which serves to welcome all guests into our household. Because of “Botho”, no matter where I am. I always volunteer to wash the dishes after a meal as a way of thanking my host. It is the motivating factor that allowed me to rock-climb and kayak in Hong Kong, facing and conquering my childhood fears of heights and drowning, head-on.

No rubric or assessment criterion can determine what makes me African. However, when all my unique qualities are fused together by my strong belief in “Botho”, my soul sings and my love for humankind shines through. That is what makes me African.

9 Personal Statement

Now that I'm writing this essay, I look back a year and a half and recall my last year in Guatemala, my home country. I was studying with a scholarship in one of the best schools in Guatemala. I participated in national competitions of science and mathematics and obtained good results. This motivated me; my plans for the future had always been to study in the top university in the country and I felt I was making the right steps to achieve my goal. Nevertheless, a year and a half ago I was no longer sure of what direction to take. I could either enter university or study in Li Po Chun UWC of Hong Kong.

Staying in Guatemala was my original choice. I had applied to the United World Colleges but I didn't know how good or bad they actually were. I was uncertain of what my future would be after studying there, since many of the Guatemalans that attended UWCs had come back to Guatemala and studied in the national universities. Dubious of the kind of opportunities people had in the UWCs made me ponder if it was worth going there for two years. There was the risk that I would go back and study in the same university that I would have otherwise. The opportunity cost seemed high to me: two years of my life and a lot of effort from my parents to cover costs that the scholarship didn't cover. Studying in the Guatemalan university was tempting.

On the other hand, I didn't want to hastily discard the UWC opportunity. I talked to several people who had studied abroad. I could conclude from their experiences that staying would bind me to a standard education thereafter making me a standard person. For once I started thinking of greater accomplishments and started dreaming of even bigger projects. The potential losses fell short of the huge possible gains. Accepting the scholarship was risky, but it would prepare me for an international education: I would learn more English and create a solid base for attending a university abroad. Studying in a university abroad would in turn prepare me to dream and succeed on another scale. In the end, I chose to come to Li Po Chun United World College.

While studying in Li Po Chun my horizons have been widened and my aspirations have magnified. While following a rigorous academic program the LPC community participates in many other activities. I have had the opportunity of working with autistic kids and playing cricket and solving math problems with people from different backgrounds. Meeting selected people from more than seventy countries has changed my perception of the world more than what I had thought it would. I see people fighting for a better future with rock solid determination, trying to “rise above oneself and grasp the world” as I do now. While I write this essay, I daydream of Nobel Prizes and Fields Medals.

10 Personal Statement: “How a boarding school experience has led to my personal growth”

My parents sent me to a boarding school at the age of six. I thought they did not love me. It was until very late that I realized their substantial contribution towards my independence and personal growth as a whole.

It was hard to do everything by myself at that age. I approached some of my schoolmates. We began to share ideas, played and did our assignments together. It is through these interactions that I learned the

importance of cooperativeness, willingness to serve and listen to other people's ideas.

After completing my primary education, I applied to a boarding high school. There I met my peers who were not familiar with such an environment of study. Some did not know how to act when they had problems. I did not hesitate to share with them my primary school experiences. I devoted my time to improve their daily school lives.

Furthermore, I created a group of study-mates for those who had problems with studying in their spare time. I collected necessary materials such as past exam papers for the subject reviews and organized revision periods. Our frequent discussions resulted in better knowledge and understanding for one another. Moreover, these did not only boost our friendship, but our academic performance as well.

I became involved in various projects after moving to Hong Kong. I volunteered to teach English to the young children in the Yao tribe of China and in Vietnam S.O.S. School. In Hong Kong, I helped mentally handicapped children by improving their drawing and painting skills. The services have been challenging because I can speak neither Vietnamese nor Chinese. However, my strong dedication to them did not allow space for this language barrier. I have also joined TeenAIDS Club and have been receiving training from different AIDS organizations. We have recently begun teaching about AIDS in both local and international schools of Hong Kong. In addition, I donated blood to the Hong Kong Red Cross Society in order to save people's lives.

All these voluntary works and services I did as I realized my initiative and motivation to share and serve. The very essence of making a difference in others' lives is what I treasure most. It is through the important tools that I picked at my early childhood that I am able to be of service and importance to other people. The challenges I encountered are almost meaningless because they are outweighed by the good qualities I gained. I am now proud to say that my parents, by considering such options for my schooling, have helped me to develop into an individual whose future will not be confined by national borders.

Scholarships and Financial Aid

Refer to the Terminology section for explanations of [scholarships and financial aid](#) and [need-blind](#).

To apply for financial aid US students complete either the CSS Profile or the FAFSA, while non-US students complete the ISFAA (International Student Financial Aid Application). Copies of the ISFAA are in the shelves in the Academic Centre (check that you have the current form) and you can download the [ISFAA 2007](#) here and the International Student Certification of Finances 2007 here or at the [College Board website international section](#) (but it can be hard to find sometimes). You may complete the form once and photocopy for each of your applications. As the ISFAA form needs parental signatures as well as information about your parents' finances, I recommend that you take the form home with you in summer (unless you live in Hong Kong in which case it will be easy for you to have the form completed when it is needed). Remember that the form has been designed to try to accommodate the huge variety of financial situations that exist around the world – parts of it may seem confusing or irrelevant. The university does however need to have an accurate assessment of your financial means before they will produce a financial aid package for you. Whatever you can do to make the form complete and accurate will help the university to help you.

Certified translation of supporting documents. In general you do **not** need to get the supporting documents (such as tax and salary statements) translated and certified for your ISFAA. Provide your own translation of key parts of the documents, either on the document itself if there is space or on an attached sheet. The university where you eventually matriculate might ask you for a certified translation at that time and they might ask for more information so, since the certified translation is likely to cost money, leave it until you are asked for it.

Where and when to send the ISFAA. While many universities expect you to submit the ISFAA with your main application, some (eg Princeton, MIT) require you to send it to their Financial Aid office at a different address. Check the instructions carefully.

While the **Certificate of Finances** form (included with the ISFAA) only needs to be sent to the university you choose to attend, it is easier to complete it when you are completing the ISFAA and many colleges prefer to receive it with the ISFAA. The university must receive this before they can issue an I-20 form to you for you to apply for a US student visa. In any case keep a photocopy of the forms you send.

The purpose of financial aid is to make university study affordable, not necessarily free. It may have up to 3 components, although loans are not common for international students:

- Grant – awarded money that does not need to be repaid
- Work study – employment on campus (note that your student visa does not allow you to work outside the university)
- Loan

In the US, universities may be state/public or private. State universities are heavily subsidised for in-state students (fees may be as low as a few thousand US\$) while out of state and foreign students pay much more. Almost no state universities offer scholarships to foreign students (the Brockport campus of SUNY, State University of New York, is one exception), so students needing financial aid must direct their attention towards the few private universities with this funding. The College Board International Student Handbook provides data for each institution on the number of international students receiving FA and their average award so it is easy to find those with lots of international FA but impossible to know how many, if any, of these students receive the full funding that many UWC students need – ie we don't know how that FA is distributed amongst the students. Probably more useful is the [Scholarships report](#) from the LPC University Database that shows all scholarship and FA offers by university since 2000.

Each institution uses its own formula for determining the FA package for its applicants. One component of this formula is the amount of international FA money the institution has available – a university with limited funds might not try to meet the full need but instead offer some incentive in the hope that students can find the remainder themselves. Another component is the maximum amount awarded to any one student – some universities for example provide FA only for tuition fees, leaving the full living costs to the student, which is unrealistic for many UWC students. Again the Scholarships report from the University Database allows you to identify universities that have made full or large FA offers.

Note that:

- University of Florida has (at 2005) 8 [UWC Scholarships](#) covering full tuition and living costs for non-US students from UWCs, as well as the Davis Incentive Grant described below.
- Methodist College has 4 full scholarships for UWC students as well as the Davis incentive Grant described below. One of these 4 scholarships is for a student from a country devastated by war or natural disaster.
- Lewis & Clark College has 5 full scholarships for UWC students each year. Check their information on <http://www.lclark.edu/dept/iso/davisuwc.html>.

Davis Scholarships and Incentive Grants

The Davis Scholarship

With the generous support of Shelby Davis the Davis UWC Scholars Program guarantees to meet the financial need (up to US\$40,000 per year) of every UWC student admitted to [Princeton](#), [College of Atlantic](#), [Wellesley](#), [Colby](#) and [Middlebury](#). Given that the full cost of attending these schools is little more than US\$40,000, this makes you as attractive financially to these schools as full fee payers. All 5 schools make far more funded offers to UWC students than similar colleges (eg 15 LPC offers by Middlebury in 2003, 23 by Colby in 2005, and 6 by Princeton in 2004). Note that this is financial aid and therefore is need-based (not a merit scholarship).

The Davis Incentive Grant

A further 11 schools are now supported by the Davis Incentive Grant list for earliest matriculation September 2007. These have an asterisk (*) in the list below. The Grant provides up to US\$10,000 (ie full \$10,000 if needed) financial aid per UWC student per year of undergraduate study. Many of the schools below have been chosen because of their long-standing interest in and support for UWC students. This Grant allows these schools to make more financial aid offers that meet a student's full need than previously (but in many cases will not make it easier to gain admission with lower grades). Note that you do not need to do anything special for this Grant - submit your usual financial aid form and the university will note that you are a UWC student and will include the \$10,000 in their calculations.

Conditions for all Davis Scholarships and Incentive Grants:

1. available to UWC students who enter the university in 2004 or later (2006 for the new schools listed above)
2. not available to students who have already started at another university – ie transfer students
3. students must maintain satisfactory academic progress through their 4 years

Note carefully: while this new Davis Incentive Grant has already resulted in more offers to UWC students from these schools, it may be unwise to restrict your applications to only these Davis-supported institutions. Many other excellent schools have supported our students previously and are worth considering for their particular strengths: eg [Chicago](#), [MIT](#), and there are many more.

Barnes Scott College (women's) *	Duke University *	San Francisco Art Institute
Bertson College of Idaho *	Earlham College	Simmons College *
Berkshire College	Franklin & Marshall College	Skidmore College
Boston Institute of Chicago	Georgetown University *	Smith College (women's)

Cornell College (women's)	Gettysburg College *	St. John's College (NM) *
Creston College	Grinnell College	Swarthmore College
Eastman Conservatory (music, dance and theatre)	Hamilton College	Trinity College (CT)
Emory College	Harvard University	Tufts University
Fairleigh Dickinson University	Haverford College	Union College
Georgetown University	Hood College	University of Florida
Haverford College	Johns Hopkins University	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill *
Hobart and William Smith Colleges	Kenyon College	University of Pennsylvania
Ipswich College	Lafayette College	University of Redlands
Kent State University	Lake Forest College	University of Richmond
Lehigh University	Lehigh University	University of Virginia
Lewis & Clark College	Lewis & Clark College	Vassar College
Luther College	Luther College	Wartburg College *
Macalester College	Macalester College	Washington & Lee University
Methodist College (NC)	Methodist College (NC)	Washington U. in St Louis
Mount Holyoke College (women's)	Mount Holyoke College (women's)	Wesleyan University (CT)
Northwestern University *	Northwestern University *	Westminster College (MO)
Oberlin College	Oberlin College	Wheaton College (MA)
St. Lawrence University	St. Lawrence University	Whitman College
		Williams College
		Yale University

SATs and fee waivers at Davis Schools

- I have gleaned the following information mostly from the universities' web sites and in some cases from current (2005-06) prospectuses. Use this as a guide – while I am confident that most or all of this is accurate, you should always check the information yourself. Please let me know if you believe I am wrong somewhere.
- SAT 2: many schools say they require the SAT but make no mention of SAT 2 – I have assumed in these cases that SAT 2 tests are not required.
 - § Note that most schools that do not require SAT 2s still recommend that you submit them if you have them – I believe that IB predicted grades from UWCs are considered highly reliable, especially by these Davis schools, so the lack of SAT 2 scores will not be important for the schools that *do not require them*.
 - § However high SAT 2 scores will always help your application so, if you have them, submit them.
- Three SAT 2 tests**
A few schools (eg Harvard, Princeton, Yale) demand three SAT 2s even though many of our students are only studying two SAT subjects in their IB programme (and a few students only have the Maths test). Harvard has said they will accept both Math 1 and Math 2 and I suspect that Princeton and Yale will also accept this. If you need to sit an SAT 2 test in a subject you are not familiar with, let me know and I will write a letter of explanation to accompany your scores.
- Sending SAT scores**
From August 2006 we will send a copy of your SAT score report with your LPC transcript **IF** you provide Emily with your **ORIGINAL** posted SAT score report. Many schools will accept this and if they don't, they will ask you for an original from Collegeboard. However, if you can afford the Score Report or Rush Report fee then use it as it will allow the school you applied to to process your application faster.
- ? means I have not been able to find the information (yet!).
- Application fee waiver for online application: schools that waive this fee make it very clear on their web sites

§ But many schools state the application fee and make no mention of a waiver – these I have rated as “no”, ie no fee waiver for online applications.

Steve Udy
Sep 2006

School	is SAT 1 required?	is SAT 2 required?	is application fee waived if apply online?
Agnes Scott College (women's)			
Albertson College of Idaho			
Amherst College	yes	2	no
Art Institute of Chicago	yes	no	no
Barnard College	yes	2	?
Bates College	no	no	fee waived for all non-US applications (online or paper)
Boston Conservatory	no	no	?
Bowdoin College	no	no	?
Brandeis University	yes	2	no
Brown University	yes	2	?
Bryn Mawr College	yes	2	no
Bucknell University			
Carleton College	yes	no	waived
Claremont McKenna College	yes	no	no
Colby	yes	no	waived
Colgate University	yes	no	waived for online for UWC students only
College of the Atlantic	no	no	no
College of Notre Dame of Maryland	yes	no	?
College of the Holy Cross	no	no	no
Colorado College	yes	no	no
Columbia University	yes	2	no
Connecticut College	no	2	fee waived for all non-US applications (online or paper)
Cornell University	yes	yes	?
Dartmouth College	yes	2	no
Dickinson College	yes	no	?
Duke University	yes	2	
Earlham College	yes	no	no
Franklin & Marshall College	yes	no	no
Georgetown University	yes	3	?
Gettysburg College	yes	no	waived for all international applications
Grinnell College	yes	no	waived
Hamilton College	yes	no	waived
Harvard University	yes	3	no
Haverford College	yes	2	no
Hood College	yes	no	waived
Johns Hopkins University	yes	no	?

School	is SAT 1 required?	is SAT 2 required?	is application fee waived if apply online?
Kenyon College	yes	no	fee waived for all non-US applications (online or paper)
Lafayette College	yes	no	no
Lake Forest College	yes	no	waived
Lehigh University	yes	no	no
Lewis & Clark College	yes (or Portfolio Path)	no	waived
Luther College	yes	no	waived
Macalester College	yes	no	?
Methodist College (NC)	yes	no	waived for UWC students only (online or paper)
Middlebury	yes	no	no
Mount Holyoke College	no	no	waived
Northwestern University			
Oberlin College	yes	no	no
Princeton	yes	3	no
St. Lawrence University	no	no	?
San Francisco Art Institute	yes	?	no
Skidmore College	yes	no	no
Simmons College (women's)			waived
Smith College	yes	no	waived
St. John's College			
Swarthmore College	yes	2	?
Trinity College (CT)	yes	no	waived
Tufts University	yes	2	no
Union College	yes	no	no
University of Florida	yes	no	waived for UWC students only only online applications accepted
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	yes	no	?
University of Pennsylvania	yes	2	?
University of Redlands	yes	no	no
University of Richmond	yes	no	?
University of Virginia	yes	no	?
Vassar College	yes	2	no
Wartburg College			waived (both online and paper)
Washington & Lee University	yes	2	?
Washington U. in St Louis	yes	no	?
Wellesley	yes	no	waived for online for UWC students only
Wesleyan University (CT)	yes	no	?
Westminster College (MO)	no	no	waived for online for UWC students only
Wheaton College (MA)	no	no	waived if apply before 1st January
Whitman College	yes	no	no
Williams College	yes	2	no
Yale University	yes	3	no

Dealing with your offers

Most US universities set a May 1st deadline for replying, either accepting or declining their offers. This date is usually a postmark deadline, and I think it is safe to assume this unless your offer letter states otherwise. Accepting the offer typically requires sending a non-refundable deposit, usually as a bank draft (~HK\$50 at many Hong Kong banks) although some universities do allow payment by credit card. The deposit is likely to be several hundred US\$.

Offer of admission with insufficient financial aid

Universities assess your financial need carefully. If you are sure that the amount they expect you to pay is unreasonable:

- the university might have misunderstood your family's financial situation.
- your family's financial situation might have changed since you completed the financial aid form.
- the university might have insufficient funds to meet your full need.

You are welcome to contact the university's Financial Aid Office to explain your situation – this will not jeopardize your admission offer. What you say to them and how much more money you request will depend on your particular situation. For example if you have been assessed as high need and only asked to pay, say, US\$5,000 out of \$40,000 then a justified request for another \$1,000 would be considered seriously (it is little money to the university but clearly a lot of money to your family). However if you had been asked to pay \$20,000 then it would not be reasonable to request another \$1,000 aid – if your family can afford \$19,000 then it can likely manage to afford \$20,000. Similarly a student of high need may be able to get a significant reduction in the amount that they pay (if justified) while a student of more means may be unable to get a useful reduction simply because a useful reduction for the latter student would cost the university much more.

Asking a Financial Aid Office to reassess your FA package implies that they made a mistake – hence they may be reluctant to change their decision unless you provide some new information (eg a change in family circumstances or a collapse in your country's economy since you completed the financial aid form) or a clarification on some important point that perhaps may not have been obvious to them. A blunt request for more money simply because you cannot afford to go will probably get you nowhere. If you do not have new information or anything that you think needs clarifying, then it may be best to ask what other sources of financial support are available, such as loans and on-campus work (note that your F-1 student visa for the US does not permit you to work outside the university).

Multiple offers

If you are in the fortunate position of receiving multiple offers, you may want to reconsider the relative merits of each institution, or you might already have a clear idea of your first choice – this is a time to revisit the various books you found useful when initially doing your research (Fiske, Insiders Guide to the Colleges, etc) and discuss with friends and family your options. Often the match between your own values and the characteristics of the college will determine how comfortable you would be there. Contacting current students at these universities who hold similar values to your own (eg student from your country, LPC and UWC alumni) can help you identify important features, both positive and negative.

As soon as you have made your decision please let Emily know and inform all of the universities that have made offers. It is important to send declines to universities as soon as you are able so that they can quickly recycle these places and perhaps also financial aid to waitlisted students, who may well include our students.

Waitlist

Waitlisted applicants will usually not receive a decision until after the university's reply deadline – ie sometime in May once the university knows who has declined its offers. Some schools do not rank their waitlist – this means that they will review all waitlisted applications before making decisions on whom to offer places to after 1st May. You do need to reply to the university (usually before 1st May) to confirm your interest in staying on the waitlist - there should be instructions in the envelope with your decision. It is a good idea to explain why this university is such a good match for you (for example it might have just the right programme, facilities, etc) and to mention anything new and significant that would support your application. In most cases another reference will not help – this would be the 4th reference they would receive about you and it is unlikely to add much to the other three.

If your first choice university has waitlisted you, you do need to secure a place somewhere else provided you have other offers. Be aware that only a small fraction of waitlisted students receive offers. Similarly if you have an offer from a university but they have waitlisted you for financial aid, you need to secure an affordable place elsewhere – because there is a chance, although small, of receiving a waitlist decision before May 1st, you may want to delay your acceptance to your #2 university until late April.

Accepting your best affordable offer means paying a deposit that you might not use if your waitlist is successful. You can think of the deposit as an insurance - you pay it but hope that you won't need to use it. As the deposit will probably be a few hundred US\$ you might not wish to forfeit this amount if you end up matriculating elsewhere. For some of you this may be a difficult decision to resolve and perhaps to think about rationally – you are welcome to discuss it with me. It is important that you think through this carefully.

Obtaining a student visa

By Peter Briggs, Director of International Student and Scholar Services, Michigan State University (article in American Colleges and Universities magazine, 2003 and the ECIS Circular publication)

The processes for obtaining a student visa and maintaining your legal immigration status while in the U.S. have, unfortunately, become more complicated since the events of September 11, 2001. The changes in these government regulations are the result of policy-makers facing the challenge of how to balance the need to live in a free society while protecting U.S. borders from terrorism. Please note that these regulations are likely to continue to change and the information in this article should be checked when you read this.

It is for this reason that you are advised to check with the International Student Office at the college/university you have selected to attend to get the latest information. In addition, the U.S. Department of State provides updated information on student visa issues in the section of its website dealing with visas. To access this, go to

http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1268.html.

One thing is clear. The doors of the U.S. institutions of higher education remain open to international students. Advisors both in and out of the U.S. will simply need to learn the new regulations and adjust to a bit of increased bureaucracy. U.S. Consulates around the world are continuing to issue student visas and the U.S. still hosts more international students than any other country in the world. What does this mean to you? Do not be discouraged. The purpose of this article is to provide you with the understanding of how to obtain a student visa.

What is an I-20 form?

When an institution in the U.S. admits a student who is not a U.S. citizen or permanent resident, they must issue a Certificate of Eligibility, more commonly known as a Form I-20, that the student can use to apply for an F-1 (student) visa. The information on the Form I-20 indicates several important points.

- The institution has determined that they have reviewed your academic records and that you are academically qualified to be admitted to the degree program offered by the institution.
- The institution has determined that sufficient financial support is available to you for the period of time you need to complete the degree program to which you have been admitted. The institution should not issue the Form I-20 to you until you have provided them with information on your ability to meet all estimated educational and living expenses. It is for this reason that they probably asked you or your parents to provide them with information about how you plan to budget for the cost of higher education. Demonstrating financial responsibility is one of the most important steps in applying for a student visa. The school states their estimate of the full cost of education in Section 7 of the I-20 and they state the financial information they have about you in Section 8. It is common that verification of health insurance to meet any catastrophic problems is included in the financial information.
- The institution states in Section 6 of the I-20 that they have determined that you either have the proficiency in English to enroll as a full-time student or that you must enroll in special language courses to bring your language skills to the level required by the institution. This is usually done by requiring you to provide scores on standardized tests like the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the SAT.

- Section 5 of the I-20 indicates your major as well as the dates of when you must report to the school and the length of time they expect it will take you to complete the course of study. This is all important information, but the date of reporting is essential for you to know. If you cannot arrive in the U.S. by the reporting date listed for your initial attendance at the school, U.S. immigration laws will not allow you to enter the U.S.
- Your name and your date of birth are listed in Section 1 of the form. The spelling of your name must be exactly the same as it appears in your passport. If the spelling of your name is different, or if the date of birth is not listed correctly, you should contact your school to request a new form with corrected information.

The role of the U.S. Consul

If you have your Form I-20, you are now ready to make an appointment to apply for the F-1 visa at the U.S. Consulate. You should make an appointment as far in advance as possible. Given new security regulations and background checks that are taking place, it is now taking longer to obtain U.S. visas. You should take with you a valid passport, your Form I-20, and the same financial verification information that you provided to the institution.

The Consular Officer has several decisions to make about you.

1. Do you have sufficient financial support? This is why you must present the financial documents.
2. Do you intend to return to your country upon completion of your studies? U.S. visa laws assume that every applicant for a nonimmigrant visa intends to remain in the U.S. It is therefore up to you to demonstrate that you have strong ties to your home country and that your intent to enter the U.S. is to depart upon degree completion. In short, you will be in the U.S. for a temporary period of time, and not permanently. This can be challenging. Here are some suggestions.
 - Economic ties: These include your family's economic position, property you may own or inherit, and your economic potential when you come home with a U.S. education.
 - Family and social ties: How many close family members live in your home country, compared to those who may live in the United States? Can you demonstrate involvement in your school or community that would be indicative of a sincere connection to your town or country? What leadership, sports and other roles have distinguished you as a person who appears likely to return home and play a role in the community?

What is SEVIS?

The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) maintains records on all students in the U.S. This system, known as the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) is scheduled to be fully implemented by January 30, 2003. SEVIS is an Internet-based system that involves electronic reporting of information. When the institution issued your Form I-20, your name was entered into SEVIS and this system will monitor your progress during the time you are in the United States.

What if you are refused a visa?

If your visa application is denied, the Consular Officer is required to give you an explanation in writing. You have the right to apply a second time, but if you reapply, make sure to prepare carefully. The Consular Officer will want to see new information from the first application that was refused.

Some things not to do

- When your intent is to be a student in the U.S., do not enter the U.S. on a tourist visa. If you are

from a country that participates in the visa waiver program, do not enter on that program. You must obtain and use the F-1 visa. If you use an incorrect visa, the U.S. government will consider that you have misrepresented your purpose for entering the U.S.

- You are required to attend the institution whose I-20 you used to enter the U.S. It would be a mistake for you to use the I-20 from one institution to enter the U.S. and then actually enroll in another school. This can be tempting if the school that is your first choice offers you admission quite late. You will create legal problems for yourself if you fail to enroll at the institution that issued the Form I-20 you used at your port of entry to the U.S.

Obtaining the visa and entering the U.S. is the first step in a much longer relationship with the U.S. When you arrive in the U.S., you should become familiar with your responsibilities to maintain your student visa. Students who are serious about their studies should not expect difficulties with the new immigration rules.

Europe

Also read the [CIS notes](#) on US style universities in Europe in Appendix 9.

Except in Britain most European public universities have no or low tuition costs leaving you with only the living costs for that country. Most of these are keen to accept non-European students although the range of English-medium courses may be quite limited. The [Netherlands](#) has the best choice of university courses in English with some universities offering complete degrees in English. Some universities in other countries may provide degrees with the 1st year of study taught in English (eg [GermanyUniversities](#)).

There are several colleges and universities in Europe (other than national universities of Britain and Ireland), which teach mainly in English. Some of these are private universities offering an American style education. The ECIS Higher Education Directory (in my office) contains descriptions of most of these English medium universities. Most of these below offer some financial assistance to international students but it is rare to find scholarships covering both tuition and living costs. The only one that seems to have significant financial aid for international students is the International University of Bremen.

The European Higher Education Fair is held every year in Hong Kong around March but unfortunately often clashes with the weekend at the beginning or end of Project Week.

If financial aid is offered, it tends to be merit based more than need based. There are significant scholarship opportunities at Utrecht, Vesalius and IUB.

Several of the schools have late winter or spring admissions deadlines. Note that IUB offers three rounds of decision (ie 3 application deadlines), including an early round in December – your chance of getting financial aid is higher if you apply earlier. Applications to these schools tend to be fairly simple. All of them require transcripts, essays, and counsellor recommendation. Most of these schools require proof of English proficiency and may ask for the TOEFL and/or the SAT.

Note that while classes are taught in English, much of the life outside class is conducted in the country's

native language. So for example, if you expect to attend IUB, you should plan on learning German.

Austria

Webster University (www.webster.edu) a branch of Webster University, MO, USA. Little, if any, financial aid is available at the European branches of Webster.

Belgium

Vesalius College

VUB Brussels (www.vub.ac.be/VECO) associated with Boston University. Vesalius offers some full and partial scholarships to international students. Students must be nominated for these scholarships. If you are interested please see me.

Bulgaria

American University in Bulgaria (www.aubg.bg)

City University, (associated with City University of Seattle, Washington)

France

The French Consulate has the EduFrance department that employs an Education Officer to offer advice on study in France

EduFrance, [Consulate General of France](#)

25/F, Tower 2, Admiralty Centre

18 Harcourt Rd, Hong Kong

Tel 3196 6208

<mailto:etu@france.co.hk>

On the Consulate's web site select English, then Going to France from the menu on the left, then select Studying in France

American University of Paris

AUP (www.aup.fr) is well established and is much an American liberal arts colleges. It is also one of the most highly regarded US style universities outside the US. Half scholarships are available to qualified applicants. AUP also grants a year of credits to graduates of IB programmes.

Parsons Paris School of Design

www.parsons.edu. Associated with Parsons School of Art and Design in the New York and Los Angeles. Little financial aid is available.

Germany

Germany actively promotes study opportunities for foreign students through the DAAD (Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst, or German Academic Exchange Service) – <http://www.daad.de/>. There are several DAAD booklets in the Academic Centre.

IB Requirements for German Public Universities

While public universities in most countries around the world accept a pass in the IB Diploma without other conditions, German public universities have strict IB requirements – read the details in the [IB](#)

[document](#) in the BUG supporting files folder:

International University of Bremen

IUB (<http://www.iu-bremen.de/>) is a new (opened 2001), small university affiliated to Rice University in Texas that is growing quickly. Uniquely it is a truly international and comprehensive university that combines both American and European styles of education. It offers an academically challenging experience in a variety of majors, most of them related to the sciences although they also offer a highly regarded interdisciplinary degree in social studies. We have had several visits from IUB representatives in recent years and they seem keen to matriculate UWC students.

Financial aid is available, although there are approx. 4,000 euros of costs that are never covered by their aid package. There are 4 application deadlines starting with 1st December – apply early if you need financial aid as this will become more competitive in the later application sessions. I visited IUB in Nov. 2003 – ask me if you want to know about my experience there.

International University of Applied Sciences Bad Honnef – Bonn

(www.fh-bad-honnef.de)

This is a totally English-medium university specialising in management in service industries, with degrees in Aviation Management, Business Management, International Hospitality and Tourism, and Event Management. They are recognised as one of the 15 leading Hotel Schools in the world. See me if you are interested – they have a contact person in Hong Kong who can meet with you to provide more information.

The International University of Germany

IUG(<http://www.i-u.de/>) is also a new private university. IUG offers several academic courses of study that combine work and study. IUG specializes in business managements, IT and related fields.

Technical University of Hamburg

The Technical University of Hamburg, general engineering science programme, (www.tuhh.de), offers a highly regarded engineering degree.

Greece

- **University of LaVerne California**, Athens Campus (email: admis@laverne.edu.gr)
- **The American College of Thessalonica** (<http://www.act.edu/>)
- **The American Farm School** (<http://www.americanfarmschool.org/>), founded in 1904; offers excellent educational opportunities in the field of agricultural economics.
- **City Liberal Studies** (<http://www.city.academic.gr>), a branch of University of Sheffield, U.K., offers degree programs in such as business, computers and psychology; graduates are awarded diplomas from the University of Sheffield on successful completion of programme

Ireland

Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland

RCSI (<http://www.rcsi.ie/>) offers degrees in medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, nursing and physiotherapy. Admission is open to students with IB Diploma scores of at least 28, which makes it far more accessible than the UK where places for non-EU students are extremely limited and scores around 40 are needed. Check the RCSI filebox in the Academic Centre for more information and also read this [electronic brochure](#).

American College in Dublin

email: degree@amcd.ie

Italy

University of Bocconi

The Università Bocconi in Milan, Italy has an International Economics and Management degree entirely in English with other programmes (Law, Economics and Business Administration) in Italian. Bocconi is very keen to get non-Italian students and has a lot of scholarship support – approximately one third of foreign students will get a scholarship covering all tuition costs and some contribution to living costs, and other Italian government funding may also be available for high need cases. Check the web site (www.unibocconi.it/undergraduate) and make enquiries through their dedicated email service at undergraduate.services@unibocconi.it. LPC had a presentation by 2 Bocconi representatives in March 2006 – these were Bocconi graduates completing an internship in Hong Kong, and most years there are Bocconi grad's working in HK so let me know if you want to make contact with someone like this.

Italian-medium universities

The following on Italian universities was sent to me by the university counsellor at Adriatic UWC in October 2003.

The most prestigious and well-known universities are:

- Bocconi – Milano – for economics and finance and management (private)
- Luiss – Roma – for social studies (private)
- Facoltà di Medicina di Padova (public)
- Facoltà di Architettura di Venezia (public)
- Scienze Internazionali e Diplomatiche di Gorizia (public)
- Scuola Interpreti e Traduttori di Trieste (public)
- Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna and Normale di Pisa (mix of public and private) – social and experimental sciences

Application Procedures

In general, things happen much later than for American and British Universities, the only exception being Bocconi (dossier for foreigners in April) and Luiss (entry exam in April). The so-called preiscrizione is not compulsory and usually you have to register only during the summer. The entry exams are in September. Foreigners need to get a visa to come and they have to make a deposit for about 350 euros per month (September to December). This means approximately 1400 euros. For the entry exams there are no general rules. Every university decides its own criteria and procedures. Anyway, this is only to get accepted in the University and not to receive the scholarship. The only exceptions are the Collegi di Eccellenza (Normale, Sant'Anna and Collegio Unico di Bologna) which are very selective and which are, in practice, accessible only for Italians.

Costs and Scholarships

The public universities normally cost 800 euros per year in taxes. The private ones range between 3000 to 8000 euros per year. Then, you have to pay for accommodation, food, and books. The scholarships are always partial and they arrive later than the actual start of the university; so you have to have some money to count on. There is no such thing as a total financial support. The institution to which you normally apply for financial aid is the so-called ERDISU (ente regionale per il diritto allo studio universitario). It can help you with a reduction of taxes, with accommodation at a minimal price, and with mensa. It is also of course possible to work (eg in bars or shops or giving private lessons). Italian Universities are not like campuses; they are usually well integrated in the town.

University entrance for foreign students

Each year at the beginning of May the Italian Ministero dell'Istruzione e della Ricerca publishes on internet www.miur.it a document (Circolare Ministeriale) giving instructions to foreign students on what they should do in order to matriculate at a university in Italy. The matriculation procedure **MUST** start from the Italian Consulate in your own country. Be scrupulous not to miss the deadlines indicated in the Circolare Ministeriale.

Books

- *Annuario delle università degli studi in Italia* – incl. 75 universities in Italy
- *RAPPORTO ANNUALE DEL CENSIS SULLE UNIVERSITÀ ITALIANE* edited by Repubblica

Web sites

http://www.murst.it/	General site for Italian universities
www.careerbookuniversita.somedia.it	Career Book Università
http://www.fondazione Rui/	Fondazione Rui – Italian foundation with limited scholarships
http://www.virgilio.it	For university search
http://www.univ.trieste.it/	Università degli Studi di Trieste (incl. School of Interpreters)
http://www.pug.units.it/	Università di Trieste Gorizia - Economics & Political Science
http://www.uni-bocconi.it/	Università Bocconi (incl. DIEM Degree in International Economics and Management)
http://www.luiss.it	Luiss Guido Carli
http://www.unive.it	Università di Venezia
-	
<u>Scuole di Eccellenza</u>	
http://www.collegio.unibo.it/	Università di Bologna
http://www.sns.it/	La Scuola Superiore Normale Pisa – pure sciences
http://www.ssug.it/	La Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna di Pisa –social sciences

Netherlands

Anne-Marie van Kempen runs Nedudesk at the Netherlands Consulate in Hong Kong to offer advice on study in the Netherlands.

Nedudesk, Consulate of the Netherlands

Suite 5702
57/F, Cheung Kong Centre
2 Queen's Road Rd, Central
Hong Kong
Tel 2297 0898
nedudesk@netvigator.com

Several Dutch universities offer courses and a few full degree programmes in English. For example Maastricht University College offers a 3-year Arts degree and a 3-year Science degree similar to the US undergraduate bachelor degree. While individual university websites are given below, the Study in Netherlands website (<http://www.studyin.nl/>) is probably your best starting point.

Most or all of these English-medium courses are largely subsidised by the Dutch government and may cost as little as around US\$1,500 per year for tuition, even for non-EU students. Depending on the location of the university, living costs may be comparable to or even cheaper than in the UK and definitely cheaper

than London. The application deadlines are in the 2nd semester.

University	Web site address (correct at Feb 2003)
Maastricht	http://www.unimaas.nl/default.asp?taal=en
University of Tilburg	http://www.uvt.nl/
Erasmus University of Rotterdam	http://www.eur.nl/
University of Groningen	www.rug.nl
Amsterdam School of the Arts	www.ahk.nl
University of Amsterdam	www.uva.nl
University of Delft	www.bu.tudelft.nl/ssc/english
University of Leiden	www.leiden.edu
University College Utrecht	www.uc.nl
University of Nijmegen	www.kun.nl

University College Utrecht

Each year we may nominate 2 students for the CEE scholarships at UC Utrecht. This scholarship covers approximately 75% of the full costs (tuition + living), leaving the student to cover less than 3,000 euro each year. The application deadline is usually in early December and I will post a sign-up list in October for students who wish to be nominated.

Also check out the following:

- **Emerson College** in Maastricht, a branch of Emerson University, MA, USA
- **Erasmus University**, Rotterdam, International Program in Business Admission (www.imscba.eur.nl)
- **University College Maastricht**
- **University of Amsterdam**, BA in International Economics (www.fee.uva.nl/ace)
- **Webster University** (www.webster.nl) a branch of Webster University, MO, USA

Spain

Costs

Spanish state universities cost around HK\$4,000 per year and living costs may be as low as HK\$2,000 per month. There is some scholarship support for students from "developing" countries.

Entrance Exam

All students need to sit an entrance exam (same for Spanish and international students). There is currently no exam session held in Hong Kong (nearest is Japan) although if sufficient numbers wanted to sit it, this may be arranged. The entrance exam score ranges from 0 (low) to 10 (high) and different universities set their acceptance criteria for various courses based on this scale. A '5' or '6' is sufficient for entry to BA programmes in most universities. A '5' is the lowest passing score so I expect all Spanish speakers who pass the IB to be able to achieve this – you may want to check with one of our Spanish students about the content of the exam.

Mireia Ruiz is the Cultural Officer at the HK Spanish Consulate. She has been very helpful.

<mailto:espcghk@asiaonline.net>, tel 2525 3041

Spanish universities web sites

- http://www.seui.mec.es/Conexiones/conexiones_universidades.html
- <http://www.netmasterti.com/unis.htm>
- <http://www.mec.es/consejou/> with an English version under construction (<http://www.mec.es/consejou/erasmus/UK/indexerasmusUK.htm>)
- <http://www.becas.com/> – information on grants at Spanish universities

St Louis University

St Louis University in Madrid, a branch of St Louis University in MO, USA, offers accredited coursework that can be applied towards a degree at an accredited US university, but it does not offer a full degree. Most students who start their degree at St Louis U in Madrid complete their bachelor degree at the US campus or at another US school.

Sweden

The Swedish Institute (<http://www.si.se/>) is a public agency that promotes higher education in Sweden. Although most foreign students study in Sweden as exchange students from other universities, there is the opportunity to apply directly to study in Sweden, in which case you are referred to as a 'free mover'.

Read more on the Study in Sweden web site http://www.sweden.se/templates/SISFrontPage___4908.asp

Switzerland

- **Franklin College Switzerland** (www.fc.edu)
- **Webster University** (www.webster.nl), a branch of Webster University, MO, USA

Several Swiss colleges offer highly regarded programmes in hospitality and hotel management. Check <http://www.hospitalityguild.com/Education/World/Switzerland.htm> for a list of schools. The **Glion Hotel School** (<http://www.glion.ch/>) is one of the more prestigious programmes. Swiss schools offer little, if any financial aid.

United Kingdom

(excluding national universities)

- **Regents College** (www.regents.ac.uk) offers limited financial aid to international students.
- **The European Business School** (<http://www.ebslondon.ac.uk/>) offers two full scholarships per year.
- **Richmond, The American International University in London** (www.richmond.ac.uk) offers limited financial aid to international students.

Other Regions

There are many universities and other higher education institutions around the world that teach in English. Some of these have accredited US undergraduate programmes. One site to research these options in more detail is Hobsons (<http://www.hobsons.com/>).

I have the ECIS Higher Education Directory available on loan from my office.

Australia

Information in Hong Kong

Australian Education Centre

Room 1708 Harbour Centre, 25 Harbour Road, Wan Chai, HK

Tel 2827 5475 ext 13

Fax 2827 1765

<http://studyinaustralia.gov.au/Sia/en/Home.htm>

Links to scholarships for international students at individual Australian universities

<http://www.detya.gov.au/highered/scholarships.htm#AustralianUniversityScholarships>

Books

Getting into Australian Universities

The Good Universities Guide

Application Deadlines

Note that although international students may be able to apply as late as November or December (to start the following Feb or Mar), Australian students must submit their application by around mid September – check with the individual universities for their particular deadlines.

A Quick Guide for the Student Adviser

By Tim Beckett, Director International Education, The Australian National University, Canberra (2002), article published in the ECIS Circular publication.

Australia: fantasy and fact

Ah, Australia! Uluru, the Sydney Opera House, the Great Barrier Reef, the Great Southern Land, the Land Down Under, land of sea and surf and sun, the Outback and the Reef and the laid-back Aussie lifestyle, "Crocodile Dundee", the Aussie Swim Team - the archetypical images of Australia.

So, what's the reality:

- Australia is the most urbanized nation on earth (nearly 40% of the current population of roughly 19 million live in just Sydney and Melbourne);
- Australia has a dynamic economy growing at roughly 3% a year (better than most other industrialized nations) and advanced social and physical infrastructure in a stable, liberal, democratic society
- 24% of the population was not born in Australia and another 27% had at least one parent born overseas; over 16% of the population speak a language other than English at home; Islam and Buddhism are the fastest growing religions - Australia is a country of racial diversity;
- more people are employed in cultural activities than in sport in Australia and Australians are reputed to be among the highest per capita book buyers in the world.

Australian inventions with worldwide application include the "Black Box" flight recorder, the self-raising construction crane that is a feature of so many skylines and, believe it or not, the dry photocopier; an Australian, Professor Frank Fenner, led the world smallpox eradication program and Australians play leading roles in world Media, Arts, Business and (particularly, Medical) Science.

The Education Sector

With around 9,600 schools (Primary and Secondary) enrolling more than 3.2 million students, nearly 2 million students in Vocational and Training institutions and 39 universities enrolling nearly 700,000 students across all imaginable programs from A-Z, education is alive and well and living in Australia. Indeed, the recently released results of the OECD Program for International Student Assessment rank Australian school students among the world's top in Reading, Math and Science.

The 38 universities that are members of the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC) - the Council of Australian university presidents - include 37 public and one private university. There are specific requirements for membership and all of the Australian members of ECIS are members of the AVCC. You can find out more about the AVCC and its members at <http://www.avcc.edu.au/>. While Australian universities are self-accrediting, they offer degrees and diplomas within the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) that is endorsed by the Australian Federal and State governments and by the AVCC. More about the AQF is at <http://www.aqf.edu.au/>.

Australian university education has its 150 year-old roots in the British tradition but it is now moving closer to the US model of hours and grade points, incorporating greater flexibility in degree structures to enable students to broaden their programs. Increasingly, the professions are moving to graduate admission and this is especially true in Medicine. Law is now most usually undertaken in the particularly Australian invention of the "Combined Degree" which allows students to fast track both their undergraduate degree and Law degree in a five-year integrated program. Combined degrees in other disciplines allow students to prepare both for employment in a profession and to follow a particular academic interest and are becoming increasingly popular with Australian and overseas students alike.

Interestingly, in Australia there are no official "league tables" of institutions: there are a number of publications that rate various university attributes but none that rank institutions one against the other. A useful guide is published by the Federal Department of Education Science and Technology (DEST) and can be found at <http://www.detya.gov.au/tenfields/>.

Overseas Students

In 2000 there were over 95,000 overseas students enrolled in Australian universities - roughly 13% of the student population. An overseas student is anybody who is not an Australian Citizen or Permanent Resident or a New Zealand Citizen. Overseas students are required to pay full cost-recovery tuition fees unless they are on a reciprocal exchange program. Annual tuition ranges from around A\$12,000 (US\$6,000) for Humanities and Social Sciences, A\$16,000 (US\$8,000) for Engineering and lab-based programs to A\$30,000 (US\$15,000) for Medicine, Veterinary Medicine and Dentistry. Add another A\$12-14,000 annually for living expenses (depending on the location of the institution) and you will have a fair idea of the affordability of Australian university programs.

Australia has a closely regulated overseas students program and all Australian institutions offering courses to overseas students must be accredited and registered on a Federal Government register called CRICOS. Unless an institution is able to quote its CRICOS number, it cannot accept overseas students nor promote its courses to them. Student visas will not be issued to students looking to enroll in non-registered institutions.

In addition, Australian institutions must conform to a National Code of Practice, enacted by the Federal

Government, that mandates minimum program information, student service, financial and administrative requirements for overseas students; the guiding principle is: "what you see is what you get". The AVCC has also weighed in with Guidelines and a Code of Ethics for universities in their dealings with international students. You can find the National Code (and information about CRICOS) at <http://www.detya.gov.au/esos/> and the AVCC Guidelines at http://www.avcc.edu.au/news/public_statements/publications/code.htm.

So why Australia?

Here's six good reasons:

- stable, safe, exciting English-speaking country
- multicultural and welcoming; diversity is encouraged
- tradition of quality education at all levels
- flexible, student-centered programs and services
- legislative protection for overseas students and mandatory Code of Practice
- highly affordable programs

All social statistics sourced from Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) collections <http://www.abs.gov.au/>.

Enrollment statistics source: DEST collections <http://www.detyq.gov.au/highered/statinfo.html>.

Japan

The web site below has information in several languages about studying in Japan.

<http://www.studyjapan.go.jp/en/index.html>

There are scholarships available for Hong Kong students to study in Japan – check the web page for the Japan Consulate in Hong Kong: <http://www.hk.emb-japan.go.jp/eng/study.html>

New Zealand

Information in Hong Kong

NZ Education Centre

Suite 6502, 65/F, Central Plaza, 18 Harbour Rd, Wanchai, HK

Tel 2526 7898

Websites

General education in NZ

<http://www.educationnz.org.nz/>

Study in New Zealand

<http://www.study-in-newzealand.org.hk/>

NZ Vice-Chancellors Committee

<http://www.nzvcc.ac.nz>

Mexico

Scholarships at Mexican Universities for UWC students (all in Mexico City)

University	CIDE Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económica	TEC Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey	EBC Escuela Bancaria
<i>Scholarships</i>	2 scholarships @ 90% of tuition	Minimum 2 scholarships @ 90% tuition	15 scholarships
<i>Living costs (student pays)</i>	300 – 400 US\$	400 – 500 US\$	
<i>Majors available</i>	Only social sciences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Public Administration · Economics · International Studies · Law · Political Studies · History 	26 majors – check the website	10 majors – check
<i>Entry requirements</i>	SAT1 > 1500	PG > 34 (out of 42)	PG > 29 (ou
<i>Application deadline</i>	early in 2 nd semester	early in 2 nd semester	15 Ma
<i>www</i>	www.cide.edu	www.tecdemonterrey.edu.mx	www.ebc
<i>University contact person</i>	Lic. Andrea Fernandez de Castro Coordinadora de Promoción de Programas académicos y admisiones mailto:andrea.fernández@cide.edu	C.P. Norma A. Rodríguez Zamora Directora de Becas y Financiamientos mailto:nrodrigu@itesm.mx	Lic. Cristina Carras International Affair Coordinator mailto:mc.carrasco
<i>Info on file in my office</i>	various brochures	catalogue	CDror

There will be Spanish entrance requirements, although total fluency in Spanish might not be needed.

Singapore

Singapore Management University

SMU is one of Singapore's public universities and offers business courses in collaboration with the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. There are 3 main undergraduate programmes: Business Management, Accountancy, and Economics. The IB is recognised for admission and credit is offered for courses where you achieve 5 or higher at HL. SAT 1 is required and maybe an English test such as TOEFL also. There seem to be some scholarship opportunities (specifically a Li Ka Shing scholarship for PRC and HK students and probably others) but they may be very competitive. Tuition fees for international students are around Sing\$6,500.

Lots of info on their web site: <http://www.smu.edu.sg/>

The following was adapted from feedback generously provided by the counselling office at UWCSEA in April 2006

SMU has an excellent reputation especially due to its connection with Wharton (U Penn). They are very pro-IB, so there is no problem getting admission with predicted IB grades, although it will be a conditional offer until the final results are released. SMU does pay a lot of attention to the SAT 1s, especially if the student wants a scholarship (those tend to have conditions attached, usually a 3-year obligation to work in Singapore or for a Singapore company, due to Singapore Government subsidies).

SMU has a new, state-of-the-art campus in the heart of the city and very conveniently located to the business district.

Notes made during an SMU admission representative's visit to UWCSEA early in 2006:

- Admission rate is 1 in 9
- 1100-1500 places available each year
- 60% A-level students from Sing, 20% Polytech students from Sing, 20% international students
- 1 in 9 get scholarships
- average IB pts for entry is 36 out of 45
- Minimum 1900 on the new SAT 1 required (for scholarships, need to have >2100)
- Don't need SAT 2s but encouraged to send if done well in them
- Extracurricular and community service activities, leadership, etc taken into account
- Personal statement of 300 words
- Interview for shortlisted applicants
- Rolling Admissions, through to early April (check web site!!)
- Special new scholarship--double degree scholars programme, no bond involved--Lee K. Chian scholarship; see website

Thailand

Asian University

AU is located only 130 km from Bangkok and may be worth considering if you want to study in Asia in English. It has undergraduate programmes in Engineering, Business and Multimedia. Total cost (tuition + board) is around HK\$70,000 per year (360,000 baht). The web site, <http://www.asianust.ac.th/>, is clear and informative.

Standardised Tests

1. Most US universities require you to submit scores for SATs. Increasingly US colleges are waiving TOEFL (or an equivalent English test) for non-native English speakers at UWCs – I am compiling a list this year (2004-05), so check with me or ask the university directly. A few Canadian universities also request SAT scores although mainly for US students (US students at LPC have the benefit of the

IB programme and should not need to submit SAT scores). In general there are no standardized test requirements for universities in other countries. Some universities in other countries might require evidence of your ability to communicate in English (eg to take TOEFL or an equivalent test) but this is usually only asked for after you have submitted your application.

2. Full scholars who also receive pocket money from the College may request LPC pay for the TOEFL test once, the SAT 1 test twice and three SAT 2 Subject Tests once – see me to claim.
3. The cheapest and easiest way to pay for these tests is by credit card. Several students at LPC have credit cards so, where possible, ask a friend to cover your payment with their card and then reimburse them when the account arrives. If necessary you may use the College credit card – refer to [Appendix 8: Registering for SAT](#).

SATs

Overview of SATs

Note that the new SAT 1, starting from March 2005, is significantly different from the previous SAT 1. The changes are described in several Collegeboard documents, which you can also find on the Collegeboard website:

- [Collegeboard New SAT Powerpoint](#)
- [Steve's SAT overview Powerpoint](#)
- [FAQs about the new SAT](#)
- [New SAT factsheet](#)
- [How the New SAT Essay section will be scored](#)
- [Q&A about new SAT](#)
- [SAT Prep School edition](#)
- [SAT Prep Student edition](#)
- [Students' questions about the new SAT](#)
- [The New SAT and our school system](#)
- [The New SAT and schools](#)

1. SATs are administered by the [College Board](#) which has an informative [SAT website](#).
2. College Board changed the names of these tests in summer 2004 from SAT 1 to SAT Reasoning Test, and from SAT 2 to SAT Subject Test.
3. Nearly all US universities require that you take SAT Reasoning Test. Some universities do not require SAT Subject Tests for IB students, but many do require it – check prospectuses or university web sites.
4. The Fiske Guide gives the 25 percentile and 75 percentile scores (ie the lower and upper boundaries for the middle 50%) for the current freshmen.
5. A high TOEFL score may compensate a low Critical Reading (the old Verbal) score. Colleges also say that they don't expect as high CR scores from non-native English speakers as from Americans.
6. You may take the tests more than once, but it probably does not make sense to take them more than twice. Universities only look at the highest scores.
7. There are 3 SAT testing dates in the 1st semester: mid October, early November and early December. The December date is the latest that you can use for most regular decision US applications. If you want to sit the Jan test, ask the individual universities that you are applying to if it's OK. I think most will say yes, but they do want to know to wait for your January scores.
8. Many students find it useful to sit the SAT Reasoning a 2nd time because the test format is initially unfamiliar – the results of the October SAT will not be available before the deadline for registering for the November SAT so most of these students do SAT Reasoning Test in October, SAT Subject Tests in November and then register for a 2nd SAT Reasoning Test in December if they wish.
9. If you sit SAT 1 more than once, universities will use your highest Math score, highest CR, and highest Writing scores.

SAT Reasoning Test is designed to measure the verbal and mathematical reasoning, and writing abilities that are important for success at university. It lasts 3 hours 45 minutes and is mostly multiple choice for the CR and Maths sections, and essay writing for the Writing section.

SAT Subject Test is a test designed to measure a student's knowledge and skills in a particular subject area. Each test lasts one hour and you can take up to three Subject Tests on the same date. It is not possible to sit both Reasoning and Subject Tests on the same day.

SAT Test dates

The SAT test dates are early May, early June, early October, early November, early December and late January. I recommend that you sit your 1st SAT Reasoning Test no later than May or June of your 1st year. The early May session is around the time of the 1st year exams and many students find they do not have the time to prepare well for this SAT session.

Registering and paying for SAT

Refer to [Appendix 8: Registering for SAT](#).

Tips on sitting SATs

1. You must have a picture ID, whether it is your school ID or Hong Kong ID. You may not enter the SAT test without one.
 2. Try to register online well before the deadline date. The SAT registration website can become very slow in the day before the registration deadline.
 3. Print out your ticket so that you also have that as identification on the day of testing.
 4. Either keep your ticket or a copy of the email from SAT confirming your registration **until** you receive your score sheet. We have had several cases of scores not arriving and SAT has been particularly unhelpful unless the registration details were provided.
 5. If you will be making corrections on the day of the test, and you have registered online, there is no form to turn in to the proctor that day. You must print a correction form from the web.
 6. You should be prepared with two #2 pencils, an eraser and an approved calculator for any SAT testing.
 7. Remember to take a tape recorder (with fresh batteries) for the SAT Subject Test Listening test – you cannot share tape recorders and you cannot make it up on another date.
 8. If you are not registered and you choose to come standby you should arrive no later than 7:30 am to be admitted. Complete the registration form beforehand and take it with you.
-

TOEFL

Test Of English as a Foreign Language

The TOEFL has 4 sections: Listening, Structure, Reading, and Writing. While TOEFL is not the only test of your ability to communicate in English available in Hong Kong, it is the most widely available. In 2005 only computer-based TOEFL tests were available in Hong Kong. Through 2005 and 2006 the new Internet-based TOEFL test (TOEFL iBT) was/is being introduced around the world. The TOEFL iBT was introduced in Hong Kong in July 2006 and the last month for the computer-based TOEFL (CBT) was September 2006 – ie from October 2006 onwards only the iBT will be available in Hong Kong.

The [TOEFL website](#) has information on the test, how to register, practice tests, etc. Every year we start with a box of TOEFL Information Bulletins in the Academic Centre – if they have all gone, ask amongst your friends since they will be somewhere around the campus.

Note:

1. The iBT is only available around 4 times per month, usually Friday or Saturday, occasionally Sunday.
2. You can register online with credit card up to 7 days before the test date.
3. You can also register by phone, fax or post, but not using the LPC credit card.
4. The testing centre is at:

HK Education Authority
Room 501
17 Tseuk Luk Street
San Po Kong
Kowloon

Tel 2350 4693

5. You must pay an extra fee if you want to reschedule the time you have chosen for your test – check the College calendar carefully and choose a time that does not conflict with College commitments.
6. It is likely that you will need to miss some class time, unless you schedule during China Week, so check with John before booking your test. Be sure to request academic leave early and notify your teachers in advance.

Other Tests

Many US universities accept ACT (<http://www.actstudent.org/index.html>) (also check the web page about [sitting ACT outside the US](#)) instead of SAT, and IELTS (<http://www.ielts.org/>) instead of TOEFL. These are cheaper than SAT and TOEFL but may be less readily available (I think the only ACT centre in Hong Kong is at the Hong Kong International School in the south of Hong Kong Island – takes around 2 hours to reach by trains and buses). IELTS is accepted by most universities in UK, Australia, Canada and New Zealand. Use the “Recognising Organisation” search feature in the upper left corner of the [IELTS home page](#) to check which universities recognise IELTS – others may also recognise IELTS but are not yet on the list. IELTS is widely recognised in Europe and Canada.

Gap Year Options

Some students decide to take a year away from study after LPC before going on to further study. Those planning to study in the southern hemisphere will have around 9 months available before their university courses begin. Most universities will allow you to defer your place for one year provided you have worthwhile reasons. The main disadvantage to the university is needing to keep a place available for you one year later along with the risk of you deciding in the end to not take up the place. A major advantage to both the university and yourself is that through increased maturity and experience you will be a more focused, committed and productive student who also contributes more to the institution. In general universities recognise that if you want to take a gap year then it is better for the university that you are allowed to have that year available. Note that most US universities are unlikely to keep your financial aid offer for a year – they will ask you to reapply for FA during the following year, and then you might receive a lower FA award or perhaps none at all, or it might go up. This is too risky to rely on.

Why?

1. It can help you develop independence and improve your ability to cope with student life.
2. It can provide a very welcome break from a demanding academic routine.
3. It could enable you to earn money to help pay for your studies.
4. It can be very worthwhile in its own right - eg voluntary work.
5. It gives you more time to consider your future career.
6. A break may be more feasible now than later on when you have taken up employment.

Why not?

1. Loafing about in the sun or working at a local factory won't count for much in career terms.
2. There is a danger of drifting and extending your 'year out' indefinitely.
3. A few higher education institutions disapprove and prefer to select students who have not taken a break from academic study.
4. Opportunities for school-leavers without professional or technical qualifications are limited - it may be better to wait until you are qualified.

More information

Gap Years are quite popular in the UK so many British newspapers have useful resources in their Education sections. Both the Independent (http://education.independent.co.uk/gap_year/) and the Guardian (<http://education.guardian.co.uk/students/gapyear/>) have many excellent articles. Some pages include links for Gap Year advice, such as http://education.independent.co.uk/gap_year/story.jsp?story=552124. Try these two pages for links to useful organisations:

http://education.independent.co.uk/gap_year/story.jsp?story=552114 and
http://education.independent.co.uk/gap_year/story.jsp?story=432432.

Possibilities

1. In the [Degree Course Descriptions](#) package there is an article entitled Taking A Year Out about gap years (find it under All Descriptions on the categories menu at the left) – it includes links to web sites offering gap year opportunities.
2. I keep several books in my office about gap years. While they are a few years old they may provide ideas that you can pursue via the web.
3. Other options:
 - check the list of organisations below
 - volunteer work with one or more of the charity organisations that we have contributed to during Project Week: Christina Noble, SOS
 - internship at Simon Bolivar UWC in Venezuela – see me for details
 - UWC 3rd year option – still under development; see me for latest information

- gaining experience relevant to your future studies/career
- employment to generally widen your experience
- employment for financial reasons
- travelling
- perfecting language skills
- time to be free!!

Organisations offering projects suitable for a gap year

Outreach International:	www.outreachinternational.co.uk
Year Out Group:	www.yearoutgroup.org
Gap Activity Projects:	www.gap.org.uk
Project Trust:	www.projecttrust.co.uk
SPW:	www.spw.org
Teaching Projects Abroad:	www.teaching-abroad.co.uk
CCC:	www.coralcay.org
The Leap:	www.theleap.co.uk
Raleigh International:	www.raleigh.org.uk
BSES:	www.bses.org.uk
Venture Co:	www.ventureco-worldwide.com
Quest Overseas:	www.questoverseas.com
Millennium Volunteers:	www.millenniumvolunteers.gov.uk
Gap Profile:	www.gaprofile.co.uk
Ski Le Gap:	www.skilegap.com
Nonstopski:	www.nonstopski.com
PwC:	www.pwcglobal.com
Accenture:	careers3.accenture.com
Year in Industry:	www.yini.org.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: LPC University Database

Click on the following hyperlinks to take you to reports extracted from my University Database. These reports are also in the folder R:\Universities\LPC applications and offers. I usually update the reports at the beginning of each year to include the offers and matriculations for the previous year's 2nd year students. Note that records go back only to 2000, that names have been deleted for privacy, and that the predicted grades have only been given from 2002 onwards.

Note that for US applications the predicted grades are just one of several tools that the universities use to decide admission offers – other factors such as SATs, transcript, references, nationality, financial need may also play an important part.

Canadian Universities	sorted by university then year
---------------------------------------	--------------------------------

Hong Kong Universities	sorted by university then year
Hong Kong by subject	sorted by subject then university
UK Universities	sorted by university
UK by subject	sorted by subject then university
Oxbridge	sorted by university then year
US Universities	sorted by university then year
Other countries	sorted by country then university
Scholarships	sorted by country then university then year
Matriculations	sorted by country then university then year

Appendix 2: LSE Guide to Applying to University for Overseas Students

Also check the LSE web site for UWC students: <http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/UWC/>



How do I choose?

- # Geographical location
- # City-based or campus
- # Size - university, department, programme
- # Academic status/reputation of institution/subject – assessments of research and teaching quality
- # Teaching and assessment methods
- # Subject choice availability/flexibility
- # Degree structure - yearly progression or modularisation, terms or semesters
- # Student mix
- # Student life - intellectual, social, political etc.
- # Accommodation provision
- # Living costs
- # Academic facilities - library, computers etc.
- # Other student facilities/services - welfare, sports etc.
- # Links with 'outside world' - government, business/finance etc.
- # Entry requirements
- # Degree of competition
- # Employment prospects for graduates

Sources of information

- # UCAS University and College Big Guide
- # Prospectuses
- # Web-sites
- # Teachers, careers advisers, family, friends etc.
- # Higher Education exhibitions
- # Student Recruitment/Admissions/International Offices
- # Open Days, personal visits
- # Other 'unofficial' guides

The application process

- # All applicants for full-time undergraduate (first degree) programmes must apply through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)

- # UCAS forms may normally be obtained from your school/college, through the local office of the British Council or directly from UCAS: <http://www.ucas.ac.uk> (Rosehill, New Barn Lane, Cheltenham, GL52 3LZ, UK)
- # Applicants from outside the UK/EU (whatever their nationality) applying for entry in 2006, can submit their completed UCAS form at any time between 1 September 2005 and 30 June 2006. **HOWEVER:** Universities and colleges do not guarantee to consider applications they receive after **15 January 2006** and some popular courses may not have vacancies after that date. You should check with individual universities and colleges if you are not sure. General advice from UCAS is to apply as early as possible to give yourself the best chance. If you think that you may be assessed as a "home" student (UK or EU) for tuition fees, you should apply by the 15 January. Note that if you are applying for Oxford or Cambridge Universities, or for medicine, dentistry or veterinary medicine/science, you must apply to UCAS by **15 October 2005**. Applications for some Art and Design courses also have different deadlines. See UCAS information booklet/web-site for further details on all deadlines
- # **When to apply to LSE:**
Competition for places is very tough at LSE and we will only consider applications submitted after 15 January if there are still places available on the relevant degree. For the vast majority of courses this is unlikely, so **ALL** applicants are advised to submit their applications to UCAS by **15 January**.
- # Applicants have **six** choices - it is not normally advisable to apply for more than two programmes at one institution or to restrict your choice of institutions to just one or two institutions
- # The form requires
 - # Personal details
 - # Academic record
 - # Personal statement
 - # Reference
- # Academic record
 - # Most institutions accept a wide range of qualifications
 - # Read the section on entrance requirements in the prospectus
 - # If you are still unsure about the suitability of your qualifications, then seek advice from the institution
- # Personal statement
 - # Be honest!
 - # Write legibly/not too small - the form is reduced in size!
- # Gap year
 - # Most institutions approve a 'gap year' provided it is used constructively
 - # Indicate request for deferred entry on application form
- # Increasingly universities use paper selection for all students and the vast majority of overseas applicants are not interviewed
- # The institutions you select each receive a copy of your UCAS form and the relevant programme selectors will decide whether or not they wish to make you an offer.
- # Further correspondence with institutions - please quote your UCAS number

What are universities looking for in applicants?

- # Academic record and reference
 - # A sound performance at GCSE, 'O' level, SPM (or equivalent examinations taken at age

16)

- # Good predicted grades at 'A' Level, IB, STPM (or equivalent examinations taken at age 18)
 - # Appropriate number/combination of subjects
 - # A reference which indicates competence, potential and suitability for the programme of study/institution
- # Personal statement
- # A well-presented, coherent and informative statement which conveys something positive about the applicant
 - # A case for the stated choice of subject(s)
 - # Evidence of independence of mind and 'self-starter' motivation
 - # Clear signs of 'sparkle' - the applicant will both benefit from and contribute to the intellectual and social life of the institution

Types of decision and outcome

- # Unconditional offer
 - # Conditional offer
 - # Reject
- # These decisions may be preceded by:
- # Internal waiting list
 - # Entrance examination/essay etc. or interview (unlikely for overseas applicants)
- # Institutions vary in the time they take to make decisions; once all the institutions you have applied to have made theirs, UCAS will send you a Statement of Decisions and tell you the date that you must reply to them by
- # Applicants should decide on their replies as soon as they are in a position to do so and not later than the reply date given. Consult the UCAS timetable for further information
- # Applicants can hold two offers – firm (first choice) and insurance (second choice) Usually these have different entry requirements

What happens when you get your examination results?

- # If you fulfil the conditions of your offer you have got a place at the university of your choice
- # If you narrowly miss the requirements, your case will be considered on an individual basis - if there are special circumstances which are relevant to your performance, please inform the institution(s) in writing or, better still, ask your School to write, preferably before (or immediately after) you sit the examinations
- # If you fail to achieve the conditions of either of your offers (or you have not received any offers) you may go into the 'clearing' process in which applicants without places are considered by those institutions with places available - be ready to respond to institutions who show an interest in you and which you are keen to attend

Sources of funding

- # You need to ensure that you will be able to meet the financial demands of studying at a university in Britain and most institutions can provide estimates of the total costs (fees, accommodation, food, personal expenditure etc.)

- # You will normally be asked to sign a financial guarantee - to confirm that you will be able to pay your fees etc.
- # Some institutions offer financial assistance to incoming students who can demonstrate evidence of need but there is never enough money to go round
- # Some institutions offer merit-based undergraduate scholarships
- # There is also some financial assistance to help registered students who face unexpected difficulties
- # The scale and nature of the different forms of financial assistance vary across institutions - consult the prospectuses for further information

Some further guidance

- # Gather as much information as possible before making your choices
- # Being at university is not just about formal studying - try to make sure your chosen university is a place in which you want to spend three years of your life
- # How prepared are you for going to university? Some things to consider:
 - o Taking lecture notes and writing essays
 - o Preparing and making class presentations
 - o Independent study
 - o Managing your time - working to deadlines
 - o Having to look after yourself
 - o Finance - making your money last
 - o Handling personal relationships
 - o Asking for help when you need it
 - o Balancing academic work and social life
- # Give the university/programme of study a fair trial but if you think you have made the wrong choice please seek advice
- # Please remember, there is no 'best' university, only the best university for YOU. Wherever you go enjoy it and good luck!

Further information about LSE

- # Undergraduate Prospectus - available from the Student Recruitment Office:
Email: stu.rec@lse.ac.uk Tel: +44(0)20 7955 6613 Fax: +44(0)20 7955 7421
- # The prospectus is also on our web site at:
<http://www.lse.ac.uk/undergraduate>
- # Student Recruitment Office web site: **<http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/studentRecruitment/>**
- # Undergraduate Admissions Office web site:
<http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/undergraduateAdmissions/>

**Jan Stockdale, Senior Lecturer in Social Psychology
London School of Economics and Political Science, August 2005**

Appendix 4: The price of a foreign degree

(South China Morning Post 2002)

Researchers find a wide discrepancy in tuition fees and student living costs in five countries with the UK and US most expensive, writes Sue Green

If you're shopping around for an overseas education, New Zealand is by far the cheapest study destination. Living costs are most expensive in the United Kingdom, while US private universities charge the highest annual tuition fees for nearly all courses.

An Australian research team has compared the costs of studying in five major education destinations: the US, Canada, UK, Australia and New Zealand. The cost of living turns out to be cheapest in New Zealand while tuition fees are lowest in both New Zealand and Canada.

A research team from IDP Education Australia, Australia's largest education student recruiter, with support from Australian Education International, a government body which promotes Australian education overseas, carried out the study.

IDP wanted the study to provide a globally recognised benchmark for comparative costs, as well as to provide itself with a marketing tool. The recruiter concluded that it found university study in Australia markedly more affordable than comparable UK and US courses.

The study found that US courses were longer - most by a year compared with other countries - a factor that can lead to higher overall costs. The second-highest fees were at US public and UK universities, depending on the course. For example, it costs more to study a Bachelor of Computing in the UK than at a US public university, but the US public institutions are cheaper than the UK Bachelor of Accounting and Bachelor of Business courses.

The study, carried out between March and September last year, compared higher education costs for overseas students - tuition and other fees such as course materials and health care, plus international students living costs in the five major markets.

The Sydney and Canberra-based Centre for International Economics was commissioned to compare the living costs, based on OECD figures for a "basket" of goods in the five countries, covering accommodation, fuel and power, food, transport, clothes and phone calls.

The study included all 39 Australian universities and New Zealand's eight, and those universities with the largest enrolments of international students in the other three markets: 50 from the US, 47 from the UK and 24 from Canada. A total of 3,146 undergraduate and postgraduate courses were included.

IDP's chief executive Lindy Hyam said the study made Australian universities more accessible and partly explained the growing demand for their courses from overseas students.

"From a purely financial perspective, an undergraduate degree in the US can cost up to two or three times more than an equivalent degree in Australia," she said.

But for bargain hunting students it is New Zealand which rates best, both on living costs and tuition fees, topping the tables when researchers compared total course costs - a combination of studying and living.

To make that comparison the team added the annual cost of tuition fees, health cover, cost of living and

extra expenditure such as books and study materials. They then arrived at a total cost by multiplying the annual figure by the length of the course.

New Zealand universities were cheaper than those in the US and UK for all undergraduate courses except medicine, which was cheapest in Canada. They were also cheaper than all Australian undergraduate courses except medicine and information technology.

The results for master's courses were mixed, but New Zealand was again cheapest for most courses, other than in some health fields. Canada offered the cheapest Masters in nursing courses and the UK the cheapest Masters in public health. New Zealand living costs were well below those of the most expensive destinations - US\$5,523 (HK\$43,000) a year, compared with US\$8,783 in the US, the most expensive country for a student to live in. The UK was second most expensive at US\$8,529 a year, followed by Canada, US\$6,906 and Australia, US\$6,043.

IDP is expected to use the study findings in its Asia marketing in an effort to attract students unable or unwilling to afford an expensive US or UK education.

But with New Zealand's international student numbers having almost doubled to 50,000 since the late 1990s and its costs significantly lower - largely as a result of a fall in value of the New Zealand dollar - Australia's smaller neighbour is shaping up as its main competitor. However, the study was a cost comparison only and did not rank the status of the courses. Past research has shown many students will pay more for education at a big name university.

Appendix 5: Application Form for Oxbridge

This is transcribed from "How to get into Oxford and Cambridge" – by Moggridge, North and North (1998)

The application form is often treated by applicants as merely a factual preliminary to the competitive stages of the admissions procedure. This is a severe mistake - your battle to impress starts when you put pen to paper. Your form is the first introduction the interviewer has to you - it is your opportunity to create a good impression. Even more importantly it is your opportunity to influence the interview process. Feed the interviewers with what you would wish to come up in the interview. On the whole interviewers are attempting to bring out the best in you and the form is your chance to help them. You must expect and be prepared to talk about what you have written on the form. You are almost inevitably on the defensive during interviews or tests. You will be nervous, questions will be coming thick and fast. It will be all you can do to keep going and you will have little chance to make rational tactical decisions or to manipulate proceedings. The application form is the one point at which you are fully in control - you have as much time as you like, and within the constraints of accuracy you can do what you like. It is not often appreciated how powerful this is and how important it is that you take full advantage of the opportunity. A well prepared application form will not get you in, but it should reduce your chances of walking away from the interview feeling that you have not given your best. To get the most out of the application form you must consider two things: what would you like to happen in the interview and what is the person reading the form making of each piece of information you supply. The combination of these two ideas must inform your decision of what to write.

Here we present a personal perspective written by one of the authors, who has to process many Cambridge application forms each year. There will be numerous differences of detail in the case of Oxford applicants, but the principles highlighted here will be fully applicable. The exercise at the end of the chapter should assist you to assemble the required information into any format.

Fill the application form out in black pen; follow the instructions exactly and make sure the result is

accurate, easily-read and neat. The best way to achieve this is to photocopy the blank form, fill it in completely and then copy the result onto the original. Under no circumstances make any spelling mistakes on the form; one or two crossings out are OK, but too many just make you look incompetent. Many candidates word-process their personal statements and glue them into the form - this is fine and often makes it easier to fit a lot of words neatly into the box. This should all sound like trivial advice, but it is astonishing how many sloppy forms are received - and however much one tries to avoid it, impressions do matter. Most importantly - take a photocopy of your completed form and keep it. You must read it before your interview. There is a long gap between filling in the form and being interviewed and it is vital that you know what they know about you. You may also have new things to add. After all nobody stands still.

In order to help you to think about the application form in a way which is helpful to you in making the most from it, I will consider each entry on the form separately. Some of the purely factual entries have been ignored. By far the most important aspect is your statement of personal and academic interests.

Personal details

- *The photograph*

This is the cause of a huge amount of unnecessary worry. The purpose of the photograph is so that when your case is discussed after the interviews by all those involved in the decision, we can remember who you are. If you have *interviewed* fifty candidates in the preceding week, it can be immensely useful to have one's memory jogged by a picture to fill out sparse *interview* notes. In marginal cases (those we would take if we had enough places), and perhaps half of those we accept fall into this category, this post- interview discussion is critical and it is almost always an advantage if a living person is remembered rather than just the imprint of some dry notes. The only important thing about the photograph, therefore, is that it looks like you! Naturally, it is better to err on the flattering side, but this really is of very much secondary importance.

- *Name, initials, title, proposed subject*

This is just factual information. It is repeated down the right hand side of the form so that it can be easily read either the right way up or in a filing cabinet. Make sure you get the letter as well as the spirit of your subject choice correct. For example if you wish to study Physics you need to write down Natural Sciences (Physical).

- *School*

Again this is factual information beyond your control. However it is worth considering what interviewers may make of it. They may make a judgement (perhaps quite arbitrarily), based on your school type and reputation, as to the likely quality of your sixth form education. This can cut both ways; you can only make a judgement as to the likely impression and play to your strengths. If you go to Manchester Grammar and your school says you are one of its top two students of the year, this will be taken very seriously; however if you are applying to read Physics and display an inability to do calculus, a correspondingly dim view will be taken. If you are at Stony Bridge Comprehensive, high praise from your school will (maybe unfairly) be looked at more skeptically, but equally you could get more leeway on your technical skills (again, perhaps unfairly).

- *College*

This is important both from a tactical and practical point of view; as discussed in the previous chapter.

- *Year of entry*

Do you want a year off or not before coming to Oxford or Cambridge? You need to make your own decision here on whether to defer entry. A few subjects (Engineering for example) strongly

advise a year off; others, such as classics or Mathematics prefer immediate entry. If you are particularly young for your school year, it might marginally help to apply for deferred entry (sometimes Colleges will advise this anyway when making an offer). In terms of the chances of getting in, it should on average make no difference whether you applied for deferred entry or not. However it does change who you are competing with. If you defer, you no longer take away someone else's place directly by getting accepted. This can work either way - in a slack year you miss the opportunity of creeping in to make up the college's quota; in a strong year, you avoid the heat of direct competition. Most applicants choose not to defer.

- *Parental occupations*

This is a bit like your school really. It creates an impression, which may be quite wrong. If your father is a Professor of History and your mother a French translator, a complete ignorance of the existence of Proust is unlikely to impress.

Qualifications

- *Academic qualifications*

Nothing to be done about this, but be aware it will be looked at with some seriousness. Straight As does impress, one worries about too many Bs.

- *Additional subjects studied*

These fall into two categories. First, those not involving examinations but enriching your sixth form education, such as a short course in Japanese or word processing. Second, those which are tested, but not by a GCSE, A-level or similar academic examination; these are often musical in nature. Some entries here do no harm to demonstrate how well-rounded an individual you are, but don't worry about leaving these boxes blank - don't invent things! Expect questions about overtones in vibrating strings if you have Grade 8 violin and are applying to do Physics or how planes stay up if you claim a glider pilot's license and want to be an Engineer. One of the things we like to feel we look for is candidates with an interest in areas relevant to their subject, but not directly involved in school syllabuses.

- *Work experience*

If you have some put it: down. Just make sure that if it is in any way relevant to your subject you can make the connections and talk sensibly about it.

Personal statements

Plans for time off. This applies only to those intending to, or in the process of, deferring. Put something interesting down, but be prepared to discuss this at interview.

Possible career. It is good to have some ideas even if they are very vague. Usually it is better if your ideas make some use of the subject you propose to study. It tends to be a put-off if you appear just to want the BA(Cantab) after your name so that you can get a highly paid City job.

Personal achievements and interests. This is the big one, your chance to show yourself as a lively, well rounded individual and to manipulate the subjects of the interview. It is also an opportunity to demonstrate your prose style; I would discourage a simple list of achievements. You are asked for both academic and non-academic interests and you should provide both. It can be identical to your UCAS statement, but on the whole I would advise against this, although it inevitably will be quite similar in content. There are two reasons for this. First you are aiming for something a bit different from the two forms. If you are applying to Oxford or Cambridge, you should be expecting to succeed fairly easily in your other applications - safety in these will suffice for UCAS. To get into Oxbridge you need to stand out from the crowd - this is your first opportunity to shine. You probably need to be a touch more daring. Secondly we have your UCAS form too - if you do something different, even if only slightly, it

shows you have gone that extra mile. Some colleges will in addition, ask you to fill in a questionnaire about your application and this may include your motivation for studying your chosen subject. The comments for the personal statement on the application form hold true.

The non-academic bit is basically your opportunity to set a background. What you need to be aiming for is to produce in the interviewer a warm glow of confidence that you are an interesting, social and competent human being. It doesn't much matter what you do, so long as you show some enthusiasm for something, be it sport, music, the arts, botany or whatever. You don't have to have done anything desperately impressive - we understand that everyone has different opportunities, aspirations and abilities in the varied spheres of their lives. Put things down because you enjoy them and are interested in them not because you think you are good at them. Having said that, if you happen to be the West of Ireland chess champion don't hide the fact. The willingness and ability to compete will be respected - Oxbridge is a very competitive environment.

On the whole I would avoid things which make you look immature - I always find I have to brace myself not to be prejudiced against those who express a passion for role playing games or train spotting (and you'd be surprised how many there are). Equally avoid looking pompous or pretentious. No one expects you *to have* a view on 18th Century Montenegrin poetry - if you really do, then by all means say so, but don't invent an opinion just to impress. Try to avoid being excessively vague in your interests. The classic is to express an enjoyment of reading - well I hope so! Tell us that you like German crime thrillers, but make sure you have something to say about them. Something little quirky can be good - I always enjoy seeing interests like beekeeping. At the same time, avoid appearing obsessive This bit is all about balance. Whatever you put, make sure you can talk sensibly, and preferably interestingly about it (consider how dull a whole day's interviews could be). General interests are not going to get you in - only the technical stuff can do this - but they can get you off to a good start.

The most important part of the application form is putting down your academic interests. Here you have to be entirely cynical - you have to impress the interviewers and you have to feed them with the questions you want to be asked. Impressing need not involve showing a massive technical knowledge or vast list of readings - evidence of inquisitiveness and a desire to look beyond the school curriculum of your subject will suffice.

There are essentially two ways of feeding questions back to yourself. The first is to express interest in a particular subject area. The more specific the area, the easier it is for you to mug up on just before the interview (though beware of looking silly - no one is going to believe in your passionate interest in capacitor design, though they will buy a love of electronic circuitry). Don't just go for what is fashionable - every budding physicist seems to love astronomy at present (though surprisingly few know who Kepler was). If your real interest happens to be what is in the news that is fine, but if you are basically a generalist and are fairly arbitrarily choosing something (and you should do this though don't choose something you really couldn't care less about), it is probably better to go for something more unusual. Most importantly don't choose something which you haven't got a cat's chance in hell of talking sensibly about. Discussing superstring theory with the Emeritus Professor of intergalactic maths can be a discomfoting experience. The optimum would be to choose something pretty specific, just above the level of your syllabus and make a real effort to understand it in some depth shortly before the interview.

The second approach is to put down two or three books you have read. You don't have to have read them yet (though that might help in making a good selection), but you will have to read (or reread) them in the weeks preceding the interview. Once again it is critical that these books are neither too vague nor too difficult - Hawking, for example, is generally pretty useless. They should be things which take you a little further than (or at least out of your A- levels and which you can understand. The interviewers need not have read the book but it helps if they have heard of it and know roughly what it's about. Stephen Jay Gould or Eatwell might be good examples. Most critically you need to understand the books and have some specific points you can pick up on and talk about in some depth.

I would suggest that you include both these strategies in your personal statement. They require preparation in the weeks before the interview and will backfire if this is not done properly. They are however your best opportunity to control the interview. If either specific subject-related reading or topics of particular interest are included, I always ask about them; I actively try to get into areas that interest the candidates and which they know something about and this is my best chance to do so. We can both know we are playing the game of feed-the-interviewer without it mattering; I am happy because it maximises my chances of getting the best out of you, you are happy because it makes the interview as predictable as possible. I am always amazed that 90% of the time I ask about these things, it turns out that the candidate has nothing to say on the subject - often they appear not even to have read the book they claimed to have done.

Sample personal statements

Below are two examples of what we consider might be good personal statements, followed by a description of the points that impress for the first, and an exercise for you to do for the second.

1. *Natural Sciences (Physical)*

My principal academic interest is physics. What I find particularly exciting about this subject is its ability to explain, from simple and often seemingly obvious axioms, both the everyday and the extraordinary in the world around us. For example, why does the pitch of an ambulance siren change as it whizzes past one? I enjoy reading around the subject to explore areas related to, but beyond the scope of the A-level course. I regularly read New Scientist and also enjoy popular science books. I have recently read "Relativity" by Albert Einstein. It was fascinating to see how such a far reaching theory as Special Relativity could be built up from two simple ideas. Although I found the details of the latter parts of the book, involving General Relativity, beyond my technical ability, the insight into how the theory was developed further was nonetheless extremely stimulating.

Outside my academic studies I enjoy a diverse range of social and cultural pursuits. I play several sports with enthusiasm, if not great talent, competing for the school cross-country and second tennis teams. I have a love of the great outdoors and take great pleasure in hiking and camping in the wilder parts of the country. I listen to a wide range of music from jungle to classical, but my particular favourite is jazz, for which reason I have been learning the tenor saxophone for the past two years.

Description of good points

You have put two lines of enquiry at the disposal of the interviewer. These are subjects which show you have the initiative to think and inquire for yourself, but which you stand a good chance of being able to produce a lucid and accurate description of. If asked about the ambulance siren you can describe the principles of the Doppler effect for sound waves. For the interviewer there are several possible developments of this. One would be to consider the difference between the Doppler effect for sound and light. You need to make sure you can follow this avenue - this is where you will really start to impress. Think about what you would ask if you were the interviewer and what connections you could make to related topics; don't, however assume that you will second guess any of the specific questions, although you might hope to predict a general line of enquiry. The fundamental importance of the speed of light in the Doppler effect can also link seamlessly into your second topic - Special Relativity. Be able to talk about this - it doesn't matter if you don't understand everything about it, just show some knowledge and interest. Although you have stated that the bit of the book on General Relativity was beyond you, it is highly likely that the interviewers will drag you into this area just to see how you cope, if they were impressed with your previous answers. It would do no harm to have up your sleeve a little more knowledge here than you cared to admit to, though it is certainly something no one can expect you to fully understand.

In terms of general interest, you have shown you get out, do things and enjoy life. You have also given plenty of opportunity for questions which you can talk easily about. It might even be of interest for the old crusties to discover what jungle is.

2. *Social and Political Sciences*

I have come to consider SPS principally as a result of aspects of my A-level courses. My politics course has developed my understanding of current politics and the history that has produced it. I find it particularly interesting to make connections between the theories covered in my schoolwork and real current political issues, such as the question of the future role of proportional representation in the British electoral system. My history syllabus provides a deeper insight into the origins of modern politics - the period covered is the mid nineteenth to the mid twentieth century. This reveals many interesting parallels with modern politics - for example, Gladstone's efforts to solve the Irish question have much to say to us about the current peace process.

My general interest in politics and the sociology which underpins it has also led me towards SPS. I read as widely as possible relevant literature - I am currently reading Alan Bullock's book "Hitler and Stalin: Parallel Lives", and often dip into the Economist. I am an active member of the Liberal Democrats; I have participated in campaigns for both local and national elections and regularly attend party meetings. I find that the Liberal Democrats' interest in constitutional reform sits particularly well with my academic interest in political theory. I am also a keen participant in the school debating club. Beyond academic pursuits. I hill walk. play the violin and cultivate carnivorous plants.

Exercise 2

In the space provided below. fill in what you think the good points of this personal statement are and, if this were your personal statement, what preparations you would make for the interview to maximise these strengths. It should not matter what subject you are planning to study - you should be interested in structure and tactics here, rather than specific content. Our comments on this personal statement appear at the end of this chapter.

What does the interviewer do with your form?

This will vary somewhat from college to college and person to person, but the principles will be pretty similar. I will describe what I do. The form itself is not taken into the interview. We have another form on which are printed your personal details. One section of this form is for my pre-interview notes. I put down the school's prediction of your A-level grades - if these are not straight As it is a worry. I also try to write down some assessment of your school reference (strong, weak, outstanding). I note your GCSE results (5A*s, 2As, 3Bs or whatever). If you have expressed an interest in anything to do with your subject I write this down, and I note any books you claim to have read. I will almost always ask about these points. I also try to put at least one general interest point down - I won't usually use this, but might start off with it if someone seems particularly nervous, or resort to it if they get totally bogged down, as a means of making a mild transition between technical topics. Recently, I have also taken to putting a star in my pre-interview notes for candidates who appear particularly strong from their application forms. This has proved a surprisingly reliable, though very far from infallible, guide to form; this indicates how significant the application form can be.

If you were asked to provide any written work or sit any tests, comments on this will also go into the pre-interview notes.

I usually read your form a few days before the interview and then have only these pre-interview notes to remind me of the salient points in the minutes before I talk to you. I have these notes available during the interview and the interview notes are added to the same form.

After all the interviews are finished we have a subject meeting with all interviewers present to decide whom to accept. We have all the application forms and our notes available at this point and in discussing marginal cases we always look again at the forms (this is where the photo is so useful). Thus the application form is both the first and last we see of you during the admissions procedure - use it well.

Notes on Exercise 2 - SPS personal statement

(a) Good points

Evidence of thinking about the nature of SPS and why to study this course. Some specific points for the interviewer to raise:

proportional representation from general interest

Gladstone's Irish question from school work (both specific points with potential for broadening into interesting discussions)

Bullock's book from general reading.

There is a nice potential connection between PR and interest in Liberal Democrat constitutional policy.

Interest is shown in subjects beyond the scope of school work and an ability to apply A-level ideas to everyday issues is demonstrated. There is *evidence* of relevant reading beyond the syllabus.

Individuality and a life beyond school are clear.

A potential weak point, which might be explored in interview - does the applicant have a balanced academic approach? Is she prepared to show the same interest in the development of Marxist theory as she has shown in PR? Just something to think about.

(b) Preparation for interview

Think about and make notes on the issues mentioned- perhaps you have already written a school essay related to one of them. Think about how you might develop a line of questioning from these issues if you were the interviewer. What did Disraeli have to say on the Irish question? Are there parallels between Ireland in the 1920s and modern Bosnia? It is of course difficult to make predictions as the possibilities are numerous, but putting yourself in the interviewer's shoes is always a worthwhile exercise. It is highly likely that the PR question will be broadened into wider British constitutional issues, given the stated interest in Liberal Democrat politics. What should Britain's relation to Europe be? How should the House of Lords be reformed? How far should regional devolution go? Does this encourage nationalism? And we are neatly back to the Irish question. One advantage of having possible links between topics within your statement is that it makes it more likely that development of the discussion will be predictable.

Read or reread Bullock's book - what would you say if you were asked what was interesting about it or what its major thrust is?

Find a couple of articles from recent copies of the Economist; read them, make notes and consider how a discussion might develop as above.

Exercise 3 - Personal details

For this exercise you should consider and then jot down the points you wish to make on your application form. Remember that you are trying to shape future interviews by offering some natural lines to the interviewer. The exercise is in two parts: the personal and the academic. For each part think about the kinds of things you need to put down to encourage desirable discussions at interview.

(a) Non-academic interests

Interest

Possible Interviewer's *Questions*

(b) Academic interests
Interest

Possible Interviewer's *Questions*

Appendix 6: Sample Personal Statements by LPC students

There are 7 personal statements here written by previous LPC students who went on to study at Cambridge, Oxford, UCL, Edinburgh, MIT, and Harvard.

Sample Statement 1

UCAS Personal Statement

Course: **International relations and languages**

International understanding – it might just sound like another of those clichés that the media throws about these days, among with the rest of the *global village* talk. But what if you actually live in such a cliché? To me, it has been a loved reality for a long time. Starting from my entry to a bilingual German-American school and resulting in my winning of a scholarship to the nation-encompassing Li Po Chun United World College, “internationalism” has drawn me to it irresistibly.

I define myself as both an idealist and a practical person, and the possibility to work in an international field excites me as I see in it a potential to combine these two qualities. Pursuing this interest, I lead a Model United Nations activity in my current school, work on setting up an Amnesty International group, participate in organizing lectures and activities on international current affairs for fellow students on a regular basis and have joined a peer mediation group. Following my passion in journalism, I have written for both the schools’ yearbook and newspaper and have led an internship project to the Beijing branch of Reuters press agency last year, where apart from valuable insights into international news I learnt the utility of speaking a less common language. I have from all these experiences come to realize that whether I wind up working in diplomacy, journalism or an international organization, I want to use all my capacities to make a positive change in the world. Besides gaining necessary background information on politics and international relations, I see it as vital to improve my language skills as I believe that language brings together people, and communication is ultimately what international understanding rests upon.

Already speaking four European languages, I wish to broaden my communication abilities to new areas such as Italian and especially the daunting task of Arabic. Having participated in my school’s Middle Eastern cultural evening both with decoration and dancing, I yearn to learn more about that fascinating region. After spending an exchange year in Brazil without previous knowledge of Portuguese and nevertheless returning fluent, the challenge of learning unknown languages has got me in a grip. Since both my interest in international relations and languages are very strong, I feel I would be best suited if I could combine a study of the two at the high standard of education that the British universities can offer to me.

Sample Statement 2

UCAS Personal Statement

Course: **Law**

My motivation to study Law and to choose it as my career came initially from my family. Both of my

parents lost their opportunity to be educated because of political instability and poverty in China in the 1960s, and as a result they worked as child labourers. Like millions of people in China and around the world, poverty and the lack of education ruined their chances of success. It is from this injustice that I developed a strong desire to do something positive in the world by working in the legal field, which is the backbone of modern society and an important way to achieve equality. For this reason, I took my own education seriously and tried to develop my potential.

I have wide-ranging academic interests, but the two subjects I find most interesting are history and literature. History requires an understanding, not merely of what happened, but of why it happened, and this requires the ability to understand what motivates people and to assess conflicting evidence. Writing history essays and course works has developed my ability to argue effectively on paper. This proved invaluable when I came to write my extended essay, for which I sought to analyse the female characters created by a Chinese novelist. To do so I had to see into the motivations behind the characters' actions and the way in which their psychological states developed through their lives. Both history and literature have given me an insight into the way in which facts can be distorted by different people's perceptions and interpretations. In my approach to academic work, I consider myself to be highly motivated and well organised. In both 1997 and 1998 I received the Award of Diligence for achieving the highest grades in my year exams.

Education involves not only developing one's academic potential, but also one's ability to relate to and work effectively with other people. At my previous school, I had the confidence and trust of my schoolmates and in 1996 I received the highest number of votes in the elections for the Student Council which organised activities and represented the student body. I was also class prefect, athletic team captain and house captain. My school also sent me on two leadership courses, one of which was organised by the Hong Kong Outstanding Student Association, and in 1998 I was awarded the Sir Edward Youde Memorial Fund Scholarship for academic and leadership abilities. At my current school, I was recently elected on to the Student Consultative Committee, which seeks to represent student opinion to the administration.

The scholarship I was awarded to study at Li Po Chun United World College has further broadened my horizons and stimulated me to think more about international issues – in particular the extent of poverty and inequality in the world. The multicultural environment has not only allowed me to appreciate other cultures and realise the importance of tolerance, but has also given me the opportunity to discuss with people from more than 60 countries issues concerning our societies. This has increased my desire to “make a difference” in the world. To achieve my goal of serving the society, I believe there is no better way than to study Law in a top-class British University.

Sample Statement 3

UCAS Personal Statement

Course: **Natural Sciences**

I live in Hong Kong, a place that I feel both proud and sorry for it. Although no one would doubt its economical success, its high population density means that it is also the perfect place to appreciate the impact that humans have on earth. Hong Kong's ecological footprint is already greater than many other Asian cities (6.0 hectare per person) and there is no evidence of either the government or the people of Hong Kong taking any steps to shrink it. Our future looks bleak. As a compassionate teenager, the miserable HK out there not only aroused, but also forced me to do something to remedy its worsening ecological situation. I always believe that a healthy ecological environment is one of the preconditions of reaching world peace on earth. Therefore, I have decided to devote myself to the study of ecology. My interest and commitment to working for HK environment is fulfilled by joining the Eco-monitoring service for two consecutive years. In cooperation with the World Wide Fund for Nature HK (WWFHK) and the Agricultural and Fisheries Department (AFD), I had been involved in a whole-year inspection

on the biotic and abiotic factors in the water of Hoi Ha Wan Marine Park, one of the few remaining places in Hong Kong where corals can be seen. Through working as part of the Eco-monitoring team of 12 people, I have built up a general knowledge and techniques on marine monitoring in the Park, such as the degree of salinity and its effect on the bleaching of corals. The project's first year was so successful that I was selected to give a talk to several hundred secondary school teachers on how to run similar environmental monitoring projects in local schools as part of a Environmental Education Workshop. Due to my enthusiasm in ecology, I chose to do an extended essay on air pollution in HK. Through field trips, designing and carrying out my experiments, I analysed the metal ions absorption ability of lichens that grow in regions of different air qualities. I found it very rewarding that I could conduct my own independent research, particularly as the results proved interesting and meaningful.

Being a scout for nice years has granted me invaluable opportunities to get in touch with the nature through expeditions in the mountains and wind surfing and sea kayaking. In 1997, I attained the supreme standard in scouting, the Chief Scout's Award. From my life in scouting, I have fully developed my leadership skills and also learnt the most important quality of a scout – to serve the community.

My leadership skills have also been enhanced through my active involvement in organizing some community service programs such as visiting some elderly homes as well as some cultural evenings in my school. Outside school, I am a committee member of the Hong Kong Union for Young Leaders – a joint school organization aims at nurturing the leadership abilities of secondary school students. In the union, I have contributed myself in the organization of some social service projects as well as a leadership seminar camp.

Although I consider myself very academically motivated, I also believe that a balanced and all-round life is essential. I enjoy a diverse range of social and cultural pursuits. I attained Grade 8 in piano in 1997 and I am currently learning guitar and saxophone. In the Hong Kong Speech Festival, 1998, I won the Certificate of Honor in Dramatic dialogue. In the sporting field, I am in Grade 8 of Karate-do and I also obtained the Award of Merit in lifesaving. I play athletics and swimming with much enthusiasm that I have won several gold medals in both my previous school and the Inter-school Athletics Competition.

By studying in Li Po Chun United World College of Hong Kong, an international school composed of students from over sixty countries, I have developed many invaluable friendships through the experience of living as well as working together. This has enhanced my awareness of the importance of international understanding. The cultural gaps due to our diverse backgrounds are now diminishing when we try to understand and even appreciate the other cultures. This has enlightened me to the fact that sometimes we need cultural sensitivities when finding solutions to environmental problems, such as local fishing rights in marine parks such as Hoi Ha Wan. UWC life has also helped to shape my image of an international student, to be outgoing and concerned about others, which I consider are essential elements for studying overseas.

Sample Statement 4

UCAS Personal Statement

Course: **Engineering**

My passion for Engineering stems from my interest in Physics and Computer Science. During the previous summer vacation, I was very excited to find out that the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology had chosen me as one of 45 students, out of a hundred nominations from different schools, to attend their Physics Summer School. It was a 5-day course in special relativity, quantum mechanics, cosmology and astronomy. I greatly enjoyed the critical thinking involved and I learned many valuable leadership skills as I was assigned to be the planning co-ordinator for the final session of the course. In

1998, I entered the Hong Kong Olympiad in Informatics, a Pascal programming competition, for which I won the bronze medal. In the same year, I was chosen by my secondary school to take part in the Chinese Youth Scientist Award Competition, in which I placed among the thirty top candidates. During my first year in LPC, I was one of 3 project holders leading the school team in the Joint School Science Exhibition Proposal Competition. This was a wonderful opportunity for me to creatively put theories into practice and closely study the advanced technology being developed nowadays. Currently, I am writing a research paper in Chemistry, for which I have programmed a computer simulation of the decomposition of hydrogen peroxide. I very much enjoy the laboratory and research work, as well as the use of computers in solving complex mathematical problems.

I strongly believe that life should be balanced. I am very fond of swimming and martial arts, and have earned my black belt in Taekwondo. The intense physical training has given me determination and perseverance to cope with setbacks. This year I am teaching the Taekwondo class at my school and it is no doubt going to be an enjoyable experience for me. Music is another one of my interests. Playing piano is relaxing and stirs my emotions and imagination, while playing the Er-hu – a Chinese stringed instrument – and the Chinese flute arouses a strong sense of my cultural heritage.

I feel a desire to serve the community with what I have learned. Last year, I taught Newly Arrived Chinese (primary six students) English. I also performed Taekwondo for the elderly. This year, I am taking part in Leadership Lui Ming Choi, in which I will teach a group of primary students drama and poetry. I find that helping the community gives me a great sense of self-fulfillment.

In the future, I would like to devote myself to engineering, especially electrical and electronic. Although I would like to work on hardware design for companies, doing research would be my first choice and my ultimate goal!

Sample Statement 5

Application for Languages at Cambridge

Unloading boxes of cooking pots, jelly, clothes, toy trucks and then peering back down from the top floor of the grubby block of flats to find children and adults alike, staring at our long silver estate Volvo, not even daring to go within two feet of it, I became aware of a difference. We had travelled to Poland to visit my family, being able to converse with them and from my own observation, I had realised the significance of the difference; my own privileged position. I quickly learned the need for sensitivity involved in immersing oneself in another culture and maintain this as a priority in language learning to an advanced level.

Being awarded as Assisted Place to attend Bradford Girls' Grammar School, launched me into a world of extra-curricular activities, characterised by the development of personal skills and the winning of two Merit Prizes. Playing county hockey and attending National Centres of Excellence exposed me to rigorous training and I nourished the sense of commitment to a cause. Inclusion in the preparation and execution of a humanitarian aid mission to Romania was a challenging organisational exercise where respect of budgets, time-scales as well as team work were essential.

Interaction with francophones from France, Quebec and Senegal on a day to day basis was facilitated by my acceptance at Li Po Chun United World College of Hong Kong. This inspired me to take the opportunity to complete the Extended Essay, a compulsory aspect of the International Baccalaureate in French, focussing on the Bleu, Blanc, Rouge trilogy of films. I see these as further steps towards comprehending the nuances of a language and of a culture that so far, have been made accessible to me first, through school, then a self-organised exchange programme and which is ultimately illuminated by the prospect of continued study at university.

Diplomacy is the career I wish to pursue, where language, respect of other cultures and what I hope is

my sensitive approach would be assets. Accordingly, after performing major roles in school productions such as 'Carousel' by Rogers and Hammerstein and 'Le Bourgeois Gentlehomme' by Moliere, I complemented this experience with acting as assistant stage manager at a professional venue, the Hong Kong Fringe Theatre. Also, holding a position in a group dedicated to teaching Chinese children English provides a contrast to the academic learning of every day. Their cultural dislocation, despite technically remaining in the same country is testament yet again to the necessity for subtlety in communication. In addition to this, being a student at an international school helps me, in a sense, to see the world without leaving the campus. The success, abilities and strengths, the weakness, tragedy and conflict among many countries are recognised by students here and we learn tolerance and friendship from one another. Consequently I feel I am quite broadly educated and feel prepared for university as my next step. Adding another language to French in this context, where a study year in the native country is offered, is a chance for me to diversify, putting into practice what I have learnt, yet equally, broadening my outlook.

Sample Statement 6

UCAS Personal Statement

Course: **Biochemistry**

Out of all the things in the world, the very essence of human life has always intrigued me most. Good health brings happiness and security – it gives us the chance to live and create in life. A profession that helps people achieve health and stability is something I always honoured most.

It was, thus, the virtue of helping people that led me into studying sciences. During my studies, I drifted to specific area of medicine – Biochemistry, wishing to use the study of life at a molecular level to fortify the medical knowledge we have. I realised that biochemistry is where I hold greatest potential.

Already at the beginning of my scientific education, in 1995, I started taking part in chemistry competitions and achieved my first success. The interest remained strong, culminating with two golden medals, in the Republic Competition in Chemistry and at the Belgrade Olympics in Chemistry, the two most prestigious school competitions in Yugoslavia. In 1997 I joined the Petnica Science Centre, a leading research centre in Yugoslavia, and did my first scientific research work in the field of Biochemistry. It was published in the paper: "In vitro studies of antioxidant properties of ethanolic extracts of sage and mint".

In 1998, a whole new perspective of life opened up to me when I won the scholarship to come to Li Po Chun United World College of Hong Kong and represent Yugoslavia. I had the chance to put my ideals of human rights and equality into action through many activities that concern the global community. I took part in the HK Model United Nations, Education project with street children in Bombay and discussed different International Current Affairs, especially as a Yugoslav representative.

My interest in science has developed in Li Po Chun as well. Working on an extended essay in Neurobiology gave for an excellent prelude for my further studies. In it, I aimed to find an experimental model to study the effects of lithium when used as a drug in manic depression. This research entailed deep and challenging scientific thought, as I made parallels between the human and the invertebrate organisms, as well as explained and correlated the effects of lithium. Both the theoretic and experimental work I did made me even more determined in my university subject choice.

I want to study Cellular and Molecular Biochemistry at one of the best UK universities because I believe its high academic rigour would satisfy my interests in science and its reputation would help me pursue my ambitions further. As an international scholar I wish to teach and use my knowledge around the world, including my country, Yugoslavia to help promote international understanding and co-operation through my professional life.

Sample Statement 7

UCAS Personal Statement

Course: **Mathematics**

My enthusiasm for Mathematics began when I was at primary school. I had extra Mathematics lessons at home, and finished the arithmetic curriculum two years ahead of other students of my age. From then on, I began to build on my great interest in the subject.

In China, I enrolled to study the Olympics Mathematics Course for three years. At fifteen, I won my first citywide Mathematics competition. During my final year at high school, I took part in the National Mathematics Competition, and won the runner up prize. This gave me greater confidence in achieving my goal to study Mathematics at University. However, I believe that an all-rounded personality is also essential to success. I was once elected as the school's publicity chairman, which allowed me to develop important skills in organization and public relations. In addition, I took part in the organisation of Chinese drama and the editing of the school's English newspaper. My active participation has cultivated my leadership skills and improved my logical and problem solving skills and analytical abilities. Furthermore, the winning of the "Star of the Future" Physics competition increased my confidence in achieving my goal in the coming years.

In order to broaden my learning, I decided to study for the International Baccalaureate Diploma at Li Po Chun, where I was privileged to be awarded a full scholarship. In IB Mathematics, I am particularly fascinated by calculus, statistics, and analysis and approximation. I enjoy reading around the subject to mathematics areas related to, but beyond the scope of the IB course. I regularly read more advanced calculus, co-ordinate geometry and also enjoy computer knowledge. Being able to study in an environment with other scholars from 70 different countries of the world has enlarged the scope of my learning. This is because the multi-cultural nature of my College has made me aware of the importance of international understanding. I joined the College's Football Team and am the College's Badminton Team leader as well as the Chinese Calligraphy leader, which has enhanced my leadership, communication and organisational skills.

I joined a British Council training course and I had a valuable chance to teach English to newly arrived children who come from China. This rewarding social service enriched my teaching experience. During my summer holiday, I went to several secondary schools in China to teach students Mathematics and Physics voluntarily. The three months that I worked made me realize the important of knowledge. In addition, I am certain in the choice of my future career such as mathematics, computer research and management, which need logical thinking, problem-solving and analytical abilities and are mainly based on mathematics.

Step by step, my dream to study at a University with a good reputation has been raised to a goal that I am hoping to achieve.

Appendix 7: Trent UWC Scholarship

Besides other scholarships available to international students, Trent University offers this scholarship specifically to 4 non-Canadian UWC students each year. Each UWC may nominate 2 students for this scholarship (students may not apply for the scholarship directly). Application forms for Trent University and for their other Trent International Programme (TIP) scholarships are with Emily.

Criteria

“Nominees are expected to be outstanding academically and well-rounded, with a proven record of leadership, extra-curricular activity, community, and international commitment who, without financial assistance, would be unable to pursue post-secondary education in North America.”

Fee Waiver

Each nominee automatically has the application fee (Can\$50) waived – no fee waiver is available for other Trent applicants (Canadian universities in general do not offer application fee waivers).

Deadline and application requirements

The nominations with the applications must be received by Trent by 15 February (2004 deadline).

The application includes various essays, letters, 2 extra letters of reference, etc – read the Trent information. These extras are needed for other TIP scholarship applications so would be required even if you are not nominated.

Nominees unsuccessful for the UWC Scholarship will automatically have their names considered for the open TIP Scholarships.

LPC selection of nominees

In selecting nominees we will not necessarily choose from the students with the highest predicted grades – these students already have excellent opportunities for other scholarship opportunities.

The sign-up list will close **15 January** (2006 date).

Appendix 8: Registering for SAT

There are 3 SAT testing dates in the 1st semester each year: early October, early November and early December. The December date is the latest that you can use for most regular decision US applications.

LPC is an SAT test centre. It seems that from around 2005 there has been a huge increase in Hong Kong registrations for SAT and LPC fills well before the registration deadline, so **be sure to register as early as possible**. If you need to choose another test centre, the International Christian School in Kowloon Tong is the easiest to get to by public transport.

Get the address correct!!

Before you can register online for an SAT, you need to set up an online account at www.collegeboard.com. It is essential that you enter a correct postal address for LPC if you want to receive your score report here. You can check your address details by selecting Update My College Profile immediately after login, and then selecting Update My Info at the top right of your screen. It should look like this (note that there is no postal code for Hong Kong and that Hong Kong only appears once in the address (as the country)):

MAILING ADDRESS

Note: This will be your official mailing address for all SAT notifications and related services, including score reports and college information.

U.S., U.S. Territories and Puerto Rico

Outside the U.S.

Mailing Address 1:

Mailing Address 2:

Mailing Address 3:

City:

Postal Code:

Region/Province:

Country:

Phone Number:

Many students find it useful to sit the SAT Reasoning Test (ie SAT 1) a 2nd time because the test format is initially unfamiliar – the results of the Oct SAT will not be available before the deadline for registering for the Nov SAT so most of these students do SAT Reasoning Test in Oct, SAT Subject Test in Nov and then register for a 2nd SAT Reasoning Test in Dec if they wish.

The deadline for registering for the Oct SAT is early Sep. This might be during Orientation Week so I recommend that you register before OW starts.

There a few SAT booklets are in the Academic Centre – please return them when you have finished with them so that other students can use them.

The cost for the SAT Reasoning Test in the 06-07 year is US\$64 (HK\$500)

The easiest and fastest way to register is online on the SAT web site <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/reg.html> however you need to pay by credit card.

If you are unable to access a credit card (either your own or through friends) then Karen in the Accounts

Office can pay using the LPC credit card. You will need to register using the computer in the Academic Centre and then Karen will enter the LPC credit card details.

1. Check the cost for the test that you want to register for and convert to HK\$ (US\$1 = HK\$7.9)
2. Get an MRF (Material Request Form) from Emily
3. Take the correct money in HK\$ with the MRF to Karen in the Accounts Office. Karen will take your money and sign the MRF as a receipt
4. Arrange a time with Karen to complete your registration

You will need to register with the SAT website before you can register to sit an SAT test. This initial registration can take 10 – 20 minutes and includes many sections (eg about your interests and previous schooling that you do not need to complete, but might wish to). If you want to use the LPC credit card be sure to complete this initial registration before coming to the Academic Centre to register for the test.

Remember!

If you want to use the LPC credit card to pay for your SAT:

- complete the initial SAT registration before seeing Karen about registering for SAT
- take the completed and signed MRF with you

Steve, Sep 2006

Appendix 9: CIS Country Educational System Overviews

We are fortunate to have permission from the Council of International Schools to include the following articles in the BUG.

1. Australia

Applying to Australian universities

Jeffrey Smart, Manager Recruitment Services, Monash International, Monash University

Australian universities operate separate admissions procedures for domestic and international students. Domestic students are those who hold citizenship or permanent residency of Australia or citizenship of New Zealand. International students are citizens of any other country.

The Australian academic year consists of two principal semesters: semester 1 commences around the beginning of March each year, semester 2 commences around the middle of July (check each university's website for specific commencement dates for each academic year). Many Australian universities have intakes in both semester 1 and semester 2, however semester 2 entry can be limited at some institutions and for particular courses, and even for some categories of student. University course guides, handbooks and web sites list the availability of intakes for each course.

1. Admissions procedures and requirements

University Admissions Committees generally regulate the minimum institutional selection principles and entry standards for undergraduate and postgraduate programs, while Faculty Admissions Committees often set specific subject requirements and selection procedures relating to particular degree courses.

Entry to university courses is normally based on three principles:

- 1. Is the secondary qualification held by the applicant equivalent to the final year of secondary school in the State in which the university is based?**
International qualifications are individually assessed for equivalence to the relevant State certificate of secondary education (year 12). Most Australian universities list international qualifications that they regard as equivalent to their State's certificate of secondary education (year 12) in their course guides and handbooks for international students, and on their websites.
- 2. Has the applicant completed the pre-requisites, and met any special selection requirements, for the particular course?**
Pre-requisite subjects vary from course to course. University Admissions Committees may set a standard subject pre-requisite for all undergraduate courses (eg. completion of English in the final year of secondary school), while faculties may set other pre-requisites, relating to the academic demands of the course and the base-level knowledge and skills assumed at first-year level.
- 3. Has the applicant reached the required academic standard?**
Most Australian universities publish entry scores required of international students who have completed qualifications equivalent to an Australian certificate of secondary education (year 12). Refer to individual university course guides, handbooks and websites for the scores required for entry to individual courses. Most universities will specify entry scores required for entry to their courses for international students who have completed the IB, A-Levels programs, and many other international qualifications.

2. Application procedures: International students

Most Australian universities manage the selection of international students through an International Admissions Unit or Office.

International students, and particularly those studying outside Australia, normally apply direct to the institution concerned.

There is no centralised international admissions system covering all universities; applicants should submit individual applications for each institution.

Admission to courses will be made on the basis of published entry criteria, and normally on the basis of academic

merit. Some courses, across a range of disciplines, have special entry requirements that must also be completed: for example, folios, auditions, personal or academic statements and references, or interviews.

Admissions Managers will also pay regard to Australian government immigration requirements when assessing applications. Nationals of some countries will be required to take an IELTS test and achieve a minimum score, in addition to meeting the university's English language entry criteria. For information about Australian government requirements see www.immi.gov.au

Applications are available from many sources including; the universities, their registered agents overseas, Australian embassies and consulates. Applications can usually be submitted to the university's registered agents, direct to the institution, and in some cases to university staff or offices based in other countries. Many institutions encourage applicants to apply online via the university's website.

Although some courses at some institutions operate strict quotas (and particular application procedures will apply) most courses operate on a "rolling" admissions basis in that selection decisions are made as applications from international students are received. Most institutions set a closing date for international applications for a particular semester (these may be flexible in some cases) - contact the universities directly for information.

To meet Australian government immigration requirements, nationals of some countries should make themselves aware of the financial and other evidentiary requirements they will need to meet to qualify for a student visa well in advance (6-12 months) of the planned commencement of their studies (see www.immi.gov.au for details).

Universities are strictly regulated by the Australian Federal Government and may only accept applications for, and make offers to, courses registered on the Commonwealth Register of International Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS); registered courses have individual CRICOS codes. Only institutions registered by the Federal Government on CRICOS may make offers to international students into their approved courses (see <http://cricos.detya.gov.au/> for details).

3. Application procedures: Australian citizens

Australian citizens and permanent residents applying for Australian university courses are required to apply through the tertiary admissions centre in the state in which they plan to study (for example, the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre). The easiest way for Australians living overseas to access information about tertiary admissions procedures is via the state tertiary admissions centres websites; (for example, www.vtac.edu.au) Tertiary admissions centres for the states in which ECIS member institutions are located are listed below. Applicants will find an online application guide and can submit and pay for their application online. The closing date for semester 1 applications is normally the final Friday in September for all states (September 30 2003 for semester one entry, 2004). After this date substantial increases apply to application fees. (Check web sites below for details).

Applications for mid-year or semester 2 entry (i.e. July) are made direct to the university. Please note, mid-year entry is not available for all courses or at all institutions.

Australian students applying from overseas need to be aware that some courses may have extra requirements that require them to undertake an exam or undergo an interview – these requirements will be outlined clearly on the state tertiary admissions centre web sites. In many cases distance will make satisfying these criteria difficult and other arrangements may need to be negotiated with course coordinators - contact details for these people can be found in university course guides, handbooks and websites.

Tertiary Admissions Centres (Australian citizens and permanent residents only)

New South Wales – University Admissions Centre (UAC) www.uac.edu.au

Queensland – Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) www.qtac.edu.au

South Australia – South Australia Tertiary Admissions Centre (SATAC) www.satac.edu.au

Western Australia – Tertiary Institutions Service Centre (TISC) www.tisc.edu.au

Victoria – Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) www.vtac.edu.au

2. Britain

British Higher Education

There are over 150 Universities and Colleges of Higher Education in the UK. Courses and structures of courses in the UK are constantly changing and adapting. Universities in Scotland – where the degree course is typically of four years' duration rather than the English three years – have long had a flexible pattern of study with first year students studying a range of subjects. A number of British universities are now adopting a flexible study pattern, with students able to use a modular structure to decide their own learning pattern.

In addition to degrees, students can study at diploma level in many universities, and are also able to follow a foundation course in several subject areas. This is very valuable when a fundamental change of subject is being considered.

All university degrees in the UK have the same status. Comparability of standards is maintained through an external examiner system. Academic staff from one institution assesses another's courses and outcomes. This system ensures that qualifications awarded to students are of a similar standard in all higher education institutions.

Although standards are uniform – broadly-speaking – no two universities or colleges are alike. Deciding which university or college to apply to is a time-consuming task, and not always an easy one, but it is one of those decisions that repays the time spent making it many times over. Students will need to embark on a rational course of self-assessment, research and planning and continually use all available sources of information.

This introduction will try to make the application process easier by covering some of the practical questions concerning admission to UK universities and colleges and through highlighting resource materials students should consider. (The word 'university' is used throughout to cover both university and college.)

WHERE TO BEGIN – CHOOSING A COURSE

Vital questions to ask

Whatever course you are considering you should obtain satisfactory answers to a range of questions such as:-

- What qualifications and grades am I likely to require to be accepted on to the course?
- Am I looking for a professional course?
- Does the structure of the course allow me to study only one subject, or more than one?
- What are the English language requirements – can I improve my English whilst studying?
- Are there any possibilities for studying abroad?
- What is the cost of living? Is accommodation provided? What sort of accommodation? Is health care provided?
- Are there special facilities for international students – are visits welcome in aiding the decision process? Can I visit before deciding whether to apply?
- Is the qualification/degree I hope to receive recognised in my home country?
- Where is the university – is it in a big city or is it on a campus out of town? How large is the student population? What sports and recreational facilities are available?
- What are the fees? Will I be able to pay by instalments? Are there any additional costs related to the course?

Sources of Information

Information on all aspects of studying and living in Britain is available from your local British Council Office. There are also a variety of other sources of information.

1. Universities and Colleges Entrance – the Official Guide

This comprehensive source of information about all UK universities and colleges called *The Big Official UCAS Guide to University & College Entrance* is published annually and your school should have a copy. (UCAS – Universities and Colleges Admissions Service.)

Alternatively British Council offices may have one; if not, you can get it from the address given at the end of this introduction. *The Big Official Guide* gives an outline of all universities in the UK and contains details of all courses available at them, including an indication of a range of the qualifications likely to be required for entry, the numbers applying, the number of places available, etc.

2. Computerised information

The UCAS web site, <wwwucas.ac.uk> also includes a course database, listing every course covered by the system. From the UCAS web-site, it is possible to link to the sites of member institutions. Many university

web-sites also offer students an opportunity for a 'virtual' tour of the campus.

ECCTIS (Educational Counselling & Credit Transfer Information Service) produces computerised information on 120,000 courses and grade requirements, as well as including the *Potter Guide*, giving descriptions of the universities. It is located on the Internet at <www.ecctis.co.uk>

3. Prospectuses

All universities publish their own detailed descriptions of courses, facilities and services. Many British Council offices carry a range of these, as do schools and colleges. If you have a specific interest in a course offered by a particular university you could obtain your own copy, free of charge, by contacting the university directly. The addresses of the universities, which are members of the European Council of International Schools, are provided in this guide.

3. Videos/CD Roms

Some universities produce their own promotional videos or CD Roms. You may obtain or borrow one free of charge from the schools liaison officer. If you are unable to visit the universities, viewing a video is one means of gaining an impression of what it is like to be a student at a particular institution. Students, and their advisers, should note that both prospectuses, and videos, paint a positive image of the institution in order to attract applications; they do, however, contain a large amount of factual material, which enables you to identify differences between universities both in ethos and physical appearance.

4. Commercial Publications

Commercial guides also give descriptions of the universities, cities or towns and provide information on the grades likely to be required. However, it should be remembered that grade requirements often vary from year to year, and that the most accurate grade requirements will be found in the university prospectuses or on the institution's web-site. The grades given in commercial publications are not always either accurate or up-to-date, as publication necessarily takes place well before the year of entry in question.

Candidates should always contact the Admissions Office of the university that interests them to obtain clarification of the typical offer grades currently sought for particular courses.

Some guides also offer subjective opinions about institutions. If you are using this type of guide you would be best advised to look at several, so that you get a balance of views.

6. Visits

Visiting universities is probably the best way to get the answers to all your questions. Universities are open during the summer and contacting the schools liaison officer well in advance would ensure a welcome.

7. People

People are always a helpful source of information – students, friends, parents, parents' friends, and teachers – anyone who may have experience of UK universities. Often these people can be very helpful, but bear in mind that their information may be some years out of date and the courses they attended may have been very different from the ones you are interested in yourself, thus zealous enthusiasm about their own university experience may mislead you.

It is most important to keep an open mind. Remember that many subjects are not necessarily taught at school, and that it is often possible to combine two or more subjects in a coherent academic programme.

The Final Choice

No one except you can or should make the final decision about which courses to apply for. Your choice will be based on many factors such as:

- The course: is it right for you? Does it emphasise the aspects of the subject in which you are interested? Is the course structure flexible? Are you able to change the emphasis of your studies if you so wish? Will it take you towards where you want to be in five years' time?
- Is the university of the type and in the location that would suit?
- Are you likely to obtain the grades to ensure an offer?
-

You may well find that the majority of prospectuses will quote grades required in terms of the English A levels. Many other qualifications (e.g. International Baccalaureate; US Advanced Placement Program; European Baccalaureate; school leaving qualification in many countries) are totally acceptable to UK universities, including a mixture of them. **If you are in doubt – ask the university concerned!**

THE MECHANICS – HOW TO APPLY

Application for most degree courses is made on a single form through the UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service) system. UCAS processes applications, on behalf of UK universities and colleges of higher education, for entry to their full-time first degree, Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE), Higher National Diploma (HND) and some university diploma courses. The university prospectus will always give full information about how

to apply for each course. Most schools receive UCAS forms and the printed directory explaining the whole procedure. If not, you can send for the form and directory by writing to the following address:

UCAS

Application requests
Rosehill, New Barn Lane
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire GL52 3LZ
UK

Or e-mail: app.req@ucas.ac.uk

You can apply for up to six courses on the UCAS form; these can be six applications for similar courses in different universities or several different courses at the same university (or a combination of these). You can apply to either Cambridge or Oxford universities (not both). For some subjects evidence of your commitment to the subject may have a bearing on whether you are offered a place. Note that if you are planning to apply for either Medicine, Dentistry or Veterinary Science, you are limited to four choices for these subjects. You will then have two remaining choices for applications to other subjects. Seek advice from your school on whether a range of different subjects on your application form is likely to be acceptable. The cost for making this application is £15.00. If you only apply to one course, at one institution, the cost will be £5.00.

If you hope to start your studies in September or October 2004, you must do all the research on where you want to study during the summer of 2003, ready to complete your part of the application form in September/October 2003. You will then require a reference on your application form, usually from your school principal or guidance counsellor. They will need to receive it in plenty of time for them to add their reference and to send it to UCAS well before the appropriate deadline.

WHEN TO APPLY

Application for entry to UK higher education takes place early in the autumn term/semester in the year before you hope to start your studies, and is much earlier than most other higher education systems. UCAS must receive your completed forms before 15 January of the year you hope to start your studies the following autumn; universities guarantee to give equal consideration to all applications submitted by that date. Forms can be sent at any time after 1 September, and you are well advised to apply as soon as you have all your 'research' completed and all your questions answered. If you are applying to Oxford or Cambridge Universities, you must apply before 15 October. Oxford and Cambridge also require the student to submit their own institutional form by that date as well. This deadline also applies to applicants for Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science at any British University.

It is very important that you follow the instructions on the sheet included with the application form, as well as making full use of the directory. For example, you must use codes when indicating both the university and course for which you are applying.

ASSESSMENT

UCAS does not make decisions. It simply acts as a clearing house between the applicant and the universities and colleges. UCAS will send a copy of your application to each of the institutions to which you have applied. An admissions tutor will consider your application in your chosen subject.

You may receive an offer (possibly after an interview or after submitting some written work) or your application maybe unsuccessful. Entry to all courses is competitive, and in some cases the competition is very strong. The criteria used for selection may vary from course to course and from university to university. You will already know from your research the level of qualifications you are likely to have to achieve. Universities will consider a number of factors when reaching decisions; ie: your actual performance in past exams and your predicted performance in future exams; your statement about yourself; how well the qualifications you are offering prepare you for the course; whether you seem to be interested in and committed to your chosen course and whether the reference received from your school indicates that you are likely to be a suitable and successful student. If you are a non-native speaker of English you may be asked to provide evidence of your ability in English. Prospectuses will give you a guide as to what qualifications (e.g. IGCSE English; TOEFL; Cambridge Proficiency; British Council IELTS are usually acceptable).

DECISIONS

Once the relevant admission tutor, either with or without an interview, has considered your application, UCAS will communicate the decision to you. You may hear from the institutions direct, and they may invite you to visit at that point, but it is the UCAS notification that is the definitive response. The decision will be either an unconditional or conditional offer of a place, or unsuccessful. You can check the progress of your application via the UCAS web-site.

If you are at a school, any offer you receive is likely to be conditional on your forthcoming qualification performance. There are many ways in which conditional offers can be expressed, but a conditional offer means that you will only know for certain if you have a place on a particular course when the results of your qualifications are known. At this stage your place will be confirmed if you have met the conditions of the offer.

How you must respond to the offers is clearly explained in the UCAS directory. In particular, it is explained that when you receive responses from all the institutions and courses to which you have applied, and if you have received several offers of places, there are rules about accepting some and declining others.

CONFIRMATION

When you get your qualification results you will know whether or not you have satisfied the conditions of your offer; a few people who get grades just below the ones asked for may also be accepted if there are sufficient places. UCAS will confirm your place if you have been accepted.

A SECOND CHANCE

Students who are unsuccessful in their initial UCAS applications may be considered for vacant places in either UCAS Extra or 'Clearing'. (Extra and clearing are processes whereby students requiring a place are matched with vacant places at institutions.) If applicants are unsuccessful in gaining any offers from their original choices, or decide to decline any offer received, they will automatically be entered into the Extra process. UCAS Extra will run until 30 June, after this date applicants will have to wait for clearing. UCAS will publish details of universities that anticipate they may still have places available and applicants therefore have an opportunity to gain a place before the clearing process starts. Full details of this are given in the UCAS directory. Clearing takes place following the publication of A level and equivalent results in August each year. Full details of this procedure are also given in the UCAS directory. Candidates should seek the advice of their teachers and course advisers when considering the options open to them in Clearing.

GETTING READY TO ENTER UNIVERSITY

Shortly before you are due to start your course, the university or college will send you a package of information about arrival, registration, accommodation and any induction or welcome programme. Before you receive this, if you have any questions about any aspect of your courses, ring or e-mail the university's Admissions Office. They will be happy to give you advice and guidance. If you need a visa, apply for one well in advance from the British High Commission, Embassy or Consulate in your home country.

COSTS

At some stage, the university you will be attending should have sent you information about the cost of studying and living. You will probably have been asked to provide documentary evidence of your ability to support yourself on your course, and you may be asked to pay some fees in advance of your arrival.

It is difficult to give costs for an overseas student studying in the UK. Tuition costs are fairly standard but vary depending upon type of courses, whether courses are laboratory or workshop based, and also whether you are an EU citizen or not.

From 1 October 2004 there will be an annual tuition fee of £1,150 for new British and EU students. Whether you will be liable to pay all, some or none of this fee is dependent upon an assessment of your family's income. For further information, see the leaflet *Help with Tuition Fees for European Union (EU) Students* available from the Department for Education and Skills. Your school should have a copy. Alternatively you can get up-to-date information at www.dfes.gov.uk/studentsupport/eustudents/index.shtml

The Big Official UCAS Guide to University & College Entrance has some basic information about accommodation and catering charges in institutions, but you will also need to allow for books, clothes, entertainment, toiletries, travel within the UK, as well as for travel to and from your home country. Make arrangements in good time to have money transferred to the UK. This is especially important if your own country has currency restrictions. Also, because transfer of funds can be slow, be sure to bring with you enough money to last you for the first few weeks.

USEFUL WEBSITES

British Council: www.britcoun.org

UKCOSA (Council for international education): www.ukcosa.org.uk

UCAS: www.ucas.ac.uk or www.ucas.com

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Big Official UCAS Guide to University and Colleges Entrance. The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). Available from UCAS (www.ucas.ac.uk) or from Swot Books, phone +44 (0)1993 774002 or via the web site <http://www.swotbooks.com> Price (complete with CD ROM package entitled Study Link UK) £24.95.

The Potter Guide to Higher Education: Quality of Life and Learning. Price £17.50. ISBN 1-870892-14-3.

From Dalebank Books, 4 Old Grammar School House, School Gardens, Shewsbury SY1 2AJ. Tel: +44 1743 243191.

Studying & Living in Britain 2001. Available from Plymbridge Distribution, Estover Road, Plymouth PL6 7PY. Tel: +44 1752 20230. Fax: +44 1752 202333. Price: £5.99. ISBN 0-746309-236.

The PUSH Guide to which University by Johnny Rich. Published by The Stationery Office Books, Price £12.99. Available from bookshops.

Which Degree? (CRAC Student Guide). Four books in a set. Social Sciences, Business and Education; Science, Medicine and Maths; Arts, Humanities and Languages; and Engineering, Technology and Geography. Can be purchased individually at £20.95 each or £79.99 for the set. Available from Plymbridge Distribution, as above.

Degree Course Guides. Books on individual degrees at £9.99 a book or a set at £87.99. Available from Plymbridge Distribution, as above.

Distribution@ucas.ac.uk gives a comprehensive list of guides published.

3. Canada

Canada

Why Study in Canada?

More than 25,000 international students study at some 90 universities in Canada. These range from large research institutions to small liberal arts universities, and are located in both major business and cultural centres and smaller, more intimate communities. The range of choice is tremendous – large and small, denominational or secular, English, French or bilingual. Most institutions are publicly funded and more than half offer graduate as well as undergraduate education.

Canada is a country built on diversity. Often referred to as a cultural mosaic, it is widely viewed as a progressive, multicultural and very welcoming country. Canada is known for its global perspective, tolerance and international peace initiatives. Three of Canada's major cities are rated by the World Bank as among the top ten best places in which to live, work and study.

Canada's universities are world-renowned for their high standards and educational excellence. A degree from a Canadian university is internationally recognized. Furthermore, tuition and living expenses are lower than at comparable institutions in the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom.

Choosing a university

One of the easiest and best ways to get information on the wide range of universities and programs of study is through the Internet. A good place to start is the web site of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) at www.aucc.ca. This site provides access to the Directory of Canadian Universities which offers hotlinks to the homepages of the universities themselves. In addition, there is comparative information on tuition fees among Canada's ten provinces, as well as comparisons of fees and living costs between Canada and the United States (for both public and private institutions), the United Kingdom, Australia and France. Additional information about specific universities and their programs can be obtained by writing to the university's Registrar.

Information Services

Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) 151 Slater Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5N1: general information on programmes for international students wishing to study at Canadian universities (application forms and details on admission requirements available only from the universities and colleges).

Canadian Bureau of International Education (CBIE) 85 Albert Street, Suite 1400, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6A4: general information on study, work and exchange in Canada and abroad; reception service for incoming international students during August and September each year at the airports of Halifax, Toronto and Vancouver.

Canadian embassies, high commissions and consulates abroad provide general information on studying in Canada and on visa requirements.

Canadian Education Centres (CECs) have been established in a number of locations around the world. These centres are supported by the government of Canada and are located in seventeen cities in Asia, the Americas and Australia. The CECs sponsor education fairs, stock information about study at a variety of Canadian institutions, give presentations on Higher Education in Canada, and have counselors on hand to assist students. For details, see www.studyincanada.com/cec/

Application and Admission to Canadian Universities

Application deadlines and notification dates vary and are generally a little later than those in the United States. There are no 'early decision' programs, nor is there a common response date. In general, students who live overseas are advised to start making enquiries a good 12 to 16 months before enrolment, to allow time to research the available choices, obtain and submit application forms, and determine visa requirements.

Criteria for admission vary among universities and according to the desired program of study, but generally the institutions within each province have a similar approach. The emphasis for the admission of students is on the academic record. Other factors play a much less significant role than they do in selection to a competitive US college. Detailed admission requirements can be obtained from the universities' web sites or by writing to the Registrar/Admissions Office of the university.

Granting of advanced standing credit varies by institution. Although many students present Advanced Placement courses, the International Baccalaureate Diploma, the French Baccalauréat, or Advanced Level Examinations, there is no uniform approach to granting credits, even within a province.

If English or French is not your mother tongue, you will need to show proficiency in the language in which you will be studying. For most English universities, this usually involves obtaining a score of 550 or better (minimum score depends on the university) in the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or equivalent. Canadian French language universities usually assess applicants on a case-by-case basis. Details can be obtained from the university's Registrar or Admissions Office.

Scholarships are generally awarded on the basis of academic merit. Universities in some provinces may offer scholarships based on athletic and academic merit. Information on awards offered to international students can be found in *Awards for Study in Canada* published by the Canadian Bureau for International Education (www.cbie.ca).

Financial aid on entry is very limited. Canadian citizens and permanent residents of Canada can apply for federal and provincial student loans. American students attending most Canadian universities are eligible for U.S. guaranteed student loans and can also claim the recently implemented HOPE Scholarship and Lifetime Learning tax credits.

Discussion of issues related to diversity and educational equity has gained wide currency in recent years. Universities generally do not operate with quotas or policies that could be construed as positive discrimination. Bridging programs that permit students from traditionally under-represented groups to obtain the necessary qualifications for entry have been in place for at least ten years at a number of institutions. In addition, many provinces have a community college system, which permits students who have a less competitive record to start post-secondary studies and improve their academic record for eventual transfer to university. Most universities have programs in place to assist students with learning disabilities or with special physical needs.

Acknowledgement CIS thanks Mariela Johansen, former Registrar and Director of Admissions, McGill University and Sally Hill, Senior Recruitment Officer, University of Toronto for their assistance.

4. New Zealand

An introduction to the New Zealand education system

New Zealand has an international reputation as a provider of quality education. The country offers a safe learning environment, which provides excellent study opportunity and support services for international students. Courses are available in academic, professional and vocational studies at universities, polytechnics and institutes of technology, colleges of education (teacher training), wananga, private education providers and secondary

schools.

Before starting their studies at a New Zealand university, many international students enrol for courses at a New Zealand secondary school, polytechnic or private education establishment. Most of the country's universities also offer foundation courses which give international students the opportunity to bring their English language skills and academic performance up to university entrance standard. Courses which focus solely on English language are also available.

New Zealand secondary schools provide a broad education for students, generally aged from 13 to 18 years. Most schools are established and funded by the New Zealand Government but there are a number of secondary schools with special philosophical or religious traditions. These receive limited state funding. All schools prepare students for state examinations and are subject to stringent quality assurance assessments. During their final year of study (usually at age 17 or 18), students may sit for a university entrance examination.

Twenty-four tertiary education institutions, which are known as polytechnics or, in some cases, institutes of technology, form the New Zealand polytechnic system. These institutions are state funded and provide education and training at many levels, from introductory studies to full degree programmes. Most universities have agreements which recognise the successful completion of a course of study at a New Zealand polytechnic or institute of technology as an entrance qualification. Some students are able to enter a university course of study with credit towards their chosen degree programme.

There is an increasing number of private tertiary institutes and training establishments in New Zealand. These providers offer a wide range of courses including English language study options. International students often enrol in these courses either to improve their English language prior to commencing university study or to pass examinations required for university entrance.

Code of practice

A Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students that ensures all education providers protect the welfare of their international students will come into force in 2002. Only signatories to the code will be allowed to enrol international students. New Zealand's universities have agreed to be bound by the Code.

Ensuring that education providers act fairly and reasonably when recruiting students, the Code will give prospective students confidence that they can trust the institutions that they choose to enrol in. Copies of the Code are available on request from the universities or from the New Zealand Ministry of Education website at www.minedu.govt.nz

Universities in New Zealand

University education was established in New Zealand in 1870 and has a similar tradition to the British university system. There are eight state-funded universities in New Zealand, all of them internationally respected for their academic and research performance. In addition to a centrally co-ordinated system of quality assurance audits at both institution and programme level, each university undertakes internal quality checks.

All New Zealand universities offer a broad range of subjects in Arts, Commerce and Science. Each has developed its own specialist subjects such as Medicine, Engineering, Veterinary Science, Computer Studies, Agriculture and Environmental Studies.

Composition of University Degrees

Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral degrees are offered by all New Zealand universities. A range of undergraduate and postgraduate diplomas is also available, along with honours programmes (usually requiring an additional year of study).

1. Undergraduate Study in New Zealand

At most New Zealand universities the course of study for a Bachelor's degree consists of a prescribed number of units, papers or courses. In each subject there are usually first-year (stage1 or 100-level), second-year (stage 2 or 200 level) and third-year (stage3 or 300 level) courses. A second-year course may be commenced only after prescribed passes in the subject at stage 1 and a third-year course only after required passes in the subject at stage 2.

In each subject the student is required to attend a given number of lectures, tutorials and/or laboratory periods per week. In some courses field trips provide opportunities for on-site study of natural phenomena or social processes. These learning contacts are supplemented by personal reading and research. Students are expected to develop independent study skills with a minimum of professional supervision. Grades given in tests, assignments and practical work count towards the final grade for a course. Most courses have a final written examination held either at mid-year (June) or the end of the academic year (October/November).

2. Postgraduate study in New Zealand.

The first degree a student is able to gain in New Zealand is as elsewhere, a Bachelor's degree. With a completed Bachelor's degree, a graduate may be able to go on to a Master's degree. These degrees may be awarded with Honours, an indication both of the challenge the course presents and of the student's achievement in it.

Graduate Diploma

A one-year, full-time course of study for graduates. It does not always require its students to have prior learning or experience in the subject matter of the diploma.

Postgraduate Diploma

A one-year's full-time study, designed for graduates, which builds on the subject matter in the academic field of the previous degree. (Definitions used by some universities may differ from these).

Master's Degree

The Master's degree is open to those who have completed a Bachelor's degree. The course of study is usually one or two years of full-time study or its equivalent in part-time study. The work required normally builds upon the prior knowledge gained in the major part of the Bachelor's degree, and most or all of it is in that discipline. It is at a more advanced level. That is normally reflected in the content of the work; in the mode of teaching which is likely to emphasise seminar presentation; and in provision of research experience for the candidate. A thesis is an account of a substantial piece of research. Many Master's degrees include a thesis component, and in some cases, particularly those which are taken after a four-year Bachelor's (Honours) course, the degree may be thesis-only. However increasingly Master's degrees by papers, or papers plus research, are becoming available. The successful student is expected to show, as the title implies, a real grasp of the subject, demonstrated by an understanding of the discipline, a capacity to reflect upon it, and an ability to undertake research into it.

Doctorate

The main doctorate offered by New Zealand universities is the PhD, or Doctor of Philosophy. This, of course, is not offered merely in the subject of Philosophy, but in the wide range of subjects' universities offer. Almost invariably, a student is required to prepare under supervision a substantial thesis that represents original research into an approved topic normally carried out over a minimum of two full-time years. Candidates prepare a thesis on the conduct and results of their research. This is marked by a panel of examiners including at least two external to the University. In most cases this is followed by an oral examination of the thesis and the candidate's knowledge in the area before the degree is awarded.

Research in New Zealand Universities

Research by New Zealand university staff covers a wide spectrum and forms a vital aspect of university teaching. Research is the principal characteristic, which distinguishes universities from other tertiary education institutions.

New Zealand maintains a high level of research activity, the calibre of which continues to be internationally recognised. The proof of this research quality is the impressive list of publications, many of them refereed journals, which emanate from New Zealand universities. Further evidence is provided by the large number of awards and distinctions achieved by New Zealand research leaders.

Foundation Studies

Foundation Studies is a one year full-time academic programme designed to prepare students from non-English speaking backgrounds for university study in New Zealand. A graduate of Foundation Studies has a university entrance qualification, recognised by all New Zealand universities and widely accepted by Australian universities.

Foundation Studies applicants must:

- be 16 years of age or over; and
- have completed a secondary school equivalent to New Zealand sixth form (year 12), including a pass in Mathematics and English OR have an overseas entry qualification; and
- have an IELTS (International English Language Testing System) score, or a TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) score, which may vary across the universities.

Academic Year

The academic year extends from the February or early March to November. The long summer vacation is from mid-November to mid-February. All universities operate a semester system, with two intakes each year in some programmes.

This provides 12 to 13 weeks of teaching in the first half-year, followed by examinations and a study break from early June to early July, then a further 12 to 13 weeks' teaching, followed again by examinations. Each semester is broken by a study break of one or two weeks. Universities now offer an increasing number of summer schools.

5. USA

INTRODUCTION TO US HIGHER EDUCATION

One of the greatest advantages of US higher education is the incredible range of opportunities offered by its more than 3,300 colleges and universities. These institutions differ from one another in a multitude of ways: in the variety of academic programs they offer, in their size, in the diversity (or lack of diversity) of their student bodies, in the level of academic demands they place on their students, in their selectivity, their cost, their location, their campus ambience. This pluralism is partly due, of course, to the sheer vastness of the United States and the tremendous diversity of its people. But it owes as much to the fact that education is not within the control of central government, but is, rather, shared between the state and local governments, on the one hand, and the private sector on the other. US education tends to be pragmatic and forward looking, and the absence of central control of the education system enables the educational institutions to respond quickly and appropriately to the needs and challenges of the times and particular locales.

Types of Institutions

If you are unfamiliar with the US system, you should know that the first post-secondary degree might be earned at either a college or a university. In other words, a college is not a secondary school. US colleges and universities are most broadly classified according to the degrees they offer and their sources of support and control.

The first level of higher (post-secondary) education is undergraduate study, which includes two-year and four-year programs. Two-year programs lead to an intermediate or associate degree, of which there are two types: occupational/vocational, which prepare students for a trade or technical job, and transfer programs, which provide the first two years of general education for transfer to a four-year program. There are over 1,000 two-year colleges in the United States.

Four-year colleges and universities, of which there are over 2,000 including most of the CIS members described in this section, offer programs leading to the bachelor's degree. Most four-year colleges and universities offer liberal arts programs in which the first two years are spent in general education courses, which may include English composition, history, science and mathematics, languages and social sciences. The second two years are spent focusing on one field of study known as the 'major'. Other four-year colleges/universities emphasize preparation for special professional areas – business, fine arts, engineering, music, pharmacy, agriculture and other specialized fields.

Graduate study or postgraduate work, is education beyond the bachelor's degree and is offered by universities. Universities are complex academic institutions that include one or more four-year under-graduate colleges, as well as several graduate and professional schools. Graduate students pursue a masters, doctoral, professional or special advanced degree. Students usually spend a year or two beyond a bachelor's degree studying for a master's, three or more years for a doctoral degree, and three or more years for a professional degree such as law, medicine, dentistry, pharmacology, etc.

US colleges and universities differ as to whether they are supported or controlled publicly or privately. Each of the 50 states in the United States supports through its tax dollars an educational system from primary school through to university. Included are a number of two-year colleges (usually called community colleges), one or more four-year colleges (or state colleges), and the complex state university, which may have one or more campuses. Since these institutions are supported in the main by tax revenues, the cost to state residents is usually quite low, and to out-of-state residents somewhat higher but still lower than the costs at many private colleges/universities. Private colleges and universities are supported mainly by donations, endowments and tuition charges, but while they generally cost more than public institutions, most have excellent financial aid programs for students who could not otherwise afford to attend. Private control usually permits a college/university greater flexibility in hiring faculty and in curriculum development; consequently private colleges and universities are often seen as providing some of the most desirable academic and social opportunities available. Many of the colleges/universities that are best known internationally (including many CIS members) are privately supported.

Other College/University Characteristics

Colleges/universities also differ tremendously in size, location and physical setting, level of academic demands, composition of student body, selectivity and mood or atmosphere of the campus. Some state universities enroll as many as 40,000 students spread over several campuses, while many private colleges/universities, some of them church-related, have fewer than 1,000 students. Colleges/universities of all types are located in every major city of the United States, and in the suburbs, and also in small towns, often giving a town its distinctive character. They are located on mountaintops, on desert sands, overlooking oceans, on the banks of great rivers and across the rich agricultural plains of the United States.

The level of academic demands and study workload varies greatly from college/university to college/university and even among departments in the larger colleges and universities. These variations are determined by the ability range of the students, the resources, especially the libraries, the training and personality of faculty members, and the ways in which students and faculty interact in discussion groups, in large lecture classes, in the laboratories and outside the classroom.

Colleges/universities are also more or less selective in their admissions policies. Some, including most community colleges and many of the other colleges/universities which draw most of their students from the local area rather than regionally or nationally, have 'open' admission, admitting any student who completes the basic application form and has fulfilled basic high school graduation requirements. Selective colleges/universities, on the other hand, receive more applications than they have places and must therefore establish additional criteria for admission. Most 'selective' colleges/universities, however, admit over two-thirds of their applicants. Only a handful of colleges/universities – perhaps one hundred or so – can be said to be highly selective, admitting fewer than half and in some cases only one out of every five of their applicants, most of whom are well qualified. Among these are some of the 'flagship' public universities, which Richard Moll has termed in his book of that title, 'Public Ivies' as well as some of the other well-known colleges and universities which draw their students from national and international populations and from a wide variety of cultural and economic backgrounds.

Deciding which college/university will be best for you

The richness of college/university opportunity in the United States ensures that there are at least several colleges/universities that are appropriate for every student who aspires to higher education. To make sure that you gain admission to a college/university in which you are likely to have a productive, successful and happy experience, it may be useful to think of the process as a matching one whose aim it is to enroll at a college/university appropriate for individual abilities, interests and resources. To make sure that you gain admission to a college/university in which you are likely to have a productive, successful and happy experience, it may be useful for you to think of the admission process as one designed to match you with the institution best suited to your individual abilities, interests and resources. But how does one go about sorting through the many possibilities and deciding where to apply?

First Steps: Listing your Interests, Abilities, Goals and the College/University Characteristics most important to you:

During the year preceding your final year at secondary school make a list of your interests and characteristics. Who are you and what do you want? In what areas do your interests lie? What do you most enjoy doing? What are your academic strengths? Your weaknesses? What do you want to learn more about? What careers do you think you might enjoy? What financial resources are available to you? You might then find it helpful to ask good friends, family members and some of your teachers how they would answer these same questions about you: then return to your list and amplify it.

A next step would be to develop a profile of a college/university which, based on your interests, abilities and goals, might be 'ideal' for you. Important factors to include would be academic programs offered, level of academic challenge, selectivity, cost and perhaps size, location, setting, composition of the student body, and the availability of certain non-academic activities.

Once you have clarified for yourself what is important about you and to you, and the characteristics of the college/university at which you think you can best develop these traits and achieve your aims, you are ready to look for specific colleges/universities which are good matches for you.

Sources of Information

There are many complementary ways to learn about colleges/universities. The first and perhaps the easiest is to talk with knowledgeable people around you, including relatives or older friends who have attended college/university in the United States, teachers, and friends with older siblings now in college. These people know you. They may have first-hand knowledge of at least one college's programs and ambience and can give you a flavor of what that college/university is like to attend.

To gain a more comprehensive, although less first-hand view, explore several guidebooks like this one. They will give you important and accurate information about many individual colleges/universities. The College Board's The College Handbook, published every year, and its companion volumes Index of Majors and The College Handbook Foreign Student Supplement are encyclopedic in scope, objective and highly accurate references, available in the counseling offices of most international schools and overseas advising centers such as the United States Information Service (USIS) counseling centers. Peterson's Guide to Four Year Colleges and especially Peterson's Applying to Colleges and Universities in the United States, a Handbook for International Students are excellent and objective sources. A number of somewhat less factual, more anecdotal guides, such as Edward Fiske's Selective Guide to Colleges and the Insider's Guide to the Colleges, published by the Yale Daily News give spicier profiles, are fun to read, and are certainly useful if read along with the more objective sources. Remember that it is important to read more than one guidebook to get an accurate and complete picture.

After you have an overview of colleges/universities from talking with knowledgeable people and from the guidebooks, you will want to start learning about colleges/universities directly from them, as they represent themselves in their viewbooks and catalogs. You can learn a tremendous amount about a college/university by what it chooses to say and to show of itself, but also what it does not say and show, and by its style: is there lots of glitter and little substance in Viewbook A? Is Viewbook B heavy with substance but low on humor? Are students usually seen in groups? Or alone? Does one get the sense of interaction between students and faculty? How well kept does the campus look? What facilities and resources are available? Are shown? Do the students look like people you'd like to know?

You will find many viewbooks and catalogs in your school's guidance office or at an overseas advising center. You can also write to the individual colleges/universities themselves requesting viewbooks and application materials. When you write, be sure to give the following information: your full name and address, your nationality, the name of the secondary school you attend, your year or graduation, the year and month you want to start college, your probable academic interests, and any extra-curricular interests you may have. With this information, the colleges/universities will be able to respond appropriately. Be sure to write about a year before you plan to enter college, remembering that it may take anywhere from three to twelve weeks to receive a reply.

Undoubtedly the best way to learn about a college/university is to visit the campus, take a tour, sit in on a class or two, eat a meal, talk with students and meet with an admissions officer for information session or interview. If you have the opportunity to visit the USA at any time prior to when you plan to enroll, be sure to take that opportunity to visit several different sorts of colleges/universities, large and small, public and private, rural, urban, suburban, etc. Such visits, of course, are generally not possible for most students living overseas. An alternative to the campus visit is to meet with a graduate of the college/university who lives near you or an admissions representative who visits your school or city. Many colleges/universities are able to send you the names of graduates with whom you can meet and talk, and admissions officers are visiting schools overseas in increasing numbers.

Applying to Colleges/Universities

Your objective should be to apply to several colleges/universities that have programs of study in the academic areas that interest you, colleges/universities at which you and your college/university advisor have determined you have a reasonable chance of being admitted and where the costs seem manageable (either through your family's financial resources, or through financial aid), and colleges/universities that have an atmosphere in which you would enjoy living and working. If you find a college/university that satisfies all your criteria and that also has open admission accepting all students who apply – then you need apply only to that one college. Similarly, if you find a college/university that meets all your criteria, and if you are admitted, and if your chances of admission appear to be fairly likely (based on your research into admissions standards at that institution and your counselor's advice), and further, if that college/university has an 'Early Decision' or an 'Early Action' plan, then you need only apply to that one college, usually by November 1: you will receive a reply early enough that you will not need to file any other applications unless your early application is denied. Most students, however, apply to several colleges/universities under the regular decision plan, and wait for a decision from all of them on their various response dates before making the final choice of where to enroll. Remember that most US institutions abide by the standard 'Candidates' Reply Date' of May 1 for the final choice.

Application Deadlines and Procedures

Application deadlines and procedures, like the colleges/universities that set them, vary widely. In general, students who live overseas are well advised to start making inquiries a good 12 to 14 months before planned enrollment, as the often slow or unreliable mails make requesting and receiving materials and asking and answering questions difficult. Some colleges/universities require standardized tests that may be taken as long as eighteen months before enrollment and must be taken no later than eight months before enrollment. The more selective the college/university is, the earlier its deadline is likely to be and the more information it is likely to ask you for. Typically, the deadline for completing an application for September entrance at a highly selective college/university will be January 1 or February 1: at some much-sought-after state universities, the deadline is even earlier. Colleges/universities with open admission, unlike selective colleges/universities, may allow one to apply at any time until a few weeks before enrollment.

It is important to consult each college's literature for information not only about deadlines but also about application requirements and procedures. Every college/university will require your most up-to-date high school record (transcript) as well as a basic recommendation from your high school counselor or principal and a personal application form which includes factual information about you, your educational history and your family.

Many four-year colleges/universities also require standardized tests: either the SAT: Reasoning Test of the College Board, or the ACT of the American College Testing Program. Some colleges/universities further require three subject-oriented tests (SAT II) of the College Board. All these tests are given at test centers (often located at American or International schools) in most large cities overseas, several times a year.

If English is not your first language, or if most of your schooling has not been in English, the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) will also be required. This test is offered at test centers around the world about ten times a year. A student's ability to speak, write and understand spoken English is a requirement for admission to almost every degree program. If your English ability is not acceptable, you may want to consider intensive study of English overseas or in the United States. Many English as a Second Language (ESL) programs are available stateside, some of them located on college/university campuses. Sometimes a student is admitted to a college/university conditionally, pending completing an ESL program.

In addition to the basic personal information, your high school record and recommendation and standardized tests, some colleges/universities will ask you to answer questions (write essays!) about your interests, goals, non-academic activities and special accomplishments. They may also ask one or two of your teachers for letters of recommendation. They may even ask you to have an interview with a local graduate of their college. All of this is time-consuming and requires effort. But you will be rewarded in proportion to your effort, for this is an interesting process in which you may learn unexpected things about yourself, things about your talents, personality, strengths and weaknesses that you may not have known before! Further consider that all of this is in the interest of matching you with the institution where you will have the best opportunity for success both academically and personally.

Financial Aid

Many American students, whether they live outside of or in the United States, receive some financial aid in the form of loans, jobs and grants to help pay for their college/university education. Financial aid is readily available for most US citizens who are eligible for it – that is, who can show, by completing one of several standard financial aid forms that they would be unable to attend the colleges/universities to which they are applying without aid. If you are a US citizen, or hold permanent US residence, you should write to the colleges/universities that interest you and ask about procedures for applying for aid.

On the other hand, the great majority of foreign nationals who come to the United States for higher education are supported financially by their families, or in the case of some graduate students, by their governments. There is, however, a limited amount of financial aid available to international undergraduates whose families are not able to meet their expenses. Most of this financial aid is given by the colleges/universities themselves in the form of need-based (not merit-based) grants (also known as 'scholarships'), and the competition for these awards is extremely keen, since there are so few of them. Many colleges/universities simply have no financial aid (or 'scholarship') funds at all for international students, and will not consider an application for admission from a student who is also applying for aid.

If you are a international student who could not study in the United States without financial aid, you must, of course, apply for aid, remembering that the competition for that aid is very intense, and that your chances of admission may well be diminished by your need for it. Once you are admitted to and decide to attend a given college, you will need to give evidence of your ability to meet the expenses of that college/university during the entire duration of your study there (either through your own resources or through financial aid) before you are issued with a student visa to enter the United States. Your evidence will be given on a form called the Certification of Finances, which you will need to file before the College/university sends you the I-20 form you need to get your visa.

Notification of Acceptance and the Next Steps

Colleges/universities with open admission will usually send notification of acceptance within weeks of receiving a completed application. Notification of the decision about your application to a selective college/university may come on a 'rolling' basis, from one to three months after your application is completed. Many colleges/universities, however, send all their decisions (other than Early Decision and Early Action notifications, which are usually sent by mid-December) on one day in late March or early April, regardless of when your application is completed. These colleges/universities practice what one might call 'precipice' admission!

Once you have received decisions from the colleges/universities to which you have applied, there are several next steps to take, depending on the decisions you have received. Colleges/universities offering you admission will ask you to respond 'yes' or 'no' to their offer by a certain date, usually May 1, the Candidates' Reply Date agreed upon by many colleges/universities. If you receive a notice of admission from several colleges/universities, you will have to decide which to attend. If you already know your order of preference, notify your first choice college/university that you will be attending. Many colleges/universities ask that you send along a financial deposit (ranging from \$50 to \$500) to hold your place in the class, when you reply. You should also notify the colleges/universities you will not be attending of your decision as quickly as possible so that your place can be offered to another student who is on a 'waiting list' anxiously waiting to hear from the college.

If you yourself are placed on a waiting list at a college/university you wish to attend, you will be asked to let the college/university know whether you wish to remain on the list. If you do, you may then be offered admission if space becomes available. Most colleges/universities give students on their waiting lists very clear instructions about what to expect and how to proceed.

Once you have sent notice that you plan to enroll, your college/university will send you detailed instructions on a whole variety of matters from housing arrangements to course requirements and selection, activities, health requirements and insurance, payment of fees and, if you are not a US citizen, documentation you will need to obtain a student visa.

Your college/university will probably offer an orientation program for all new students that will bring you to campus several days before the start of the new school year. Some colleges/universities also offer a special program for new international students. Take advantage of such a program. You will make many new friends from all over the world as you begin the next adventure in your life – higher education.

Nancy J. Maly
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6. US-style Universities in Europe and Middle East

US Four-Year Degree Granting Colleges and Universities in Europe and the Middle East

Introduction

These institutions provide a higher education opportunity based on the system prevailing in the USA, and all have either US regional accreditation or government recognition in their host country. All offer full undergraduate degree programs in a variety of majors, and most provide study abroad and transfer opportunities. A few also offer Master degree programs.

These colleges and universities are characterized by their use of an American curriculum, and they have a slightly different *raison d'être* from US based colleges and universities. They were founded on the premise that in today's world the informed citizen must be world-minded and appreciate the essential interdependence of mankind regardless of national frontiers.

As a group they are relative newcomers on the international education scene, although some of them, notably the American College of Greece (Deree College), can date their foundations to the last century. The others are of post-war origin, with the first great period of growth being from 1969-1972 during which time no fewer than nine colleges were established, in the UK and in continental Europe.

Several of the institutions described began as two-year programs to serve the sons and daughters of American diplomatic, military and business personnel in Europe, and then evolved into four-year degree-granting institutions, examples being the American University of Paris and Franklin College Switzerland. Others, such as Richmond, started with a junior year abroad program on to which a freshman program was later grafted. Webster University, with still greater ambition, announced its arrival in Europe with not only Bachelor's but also Master's degrees.

Today, there are American colleges in most western European countries including Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Holland, Italy, Switzerland, and the UK. All of them consider students from American, European and other international schools. The colleges and universities range in size from the 150 students at the Parsons School of Design, Paris to nearly 7,000 at the American College in Greece and over 1,000 at Richmond, The American International University in London and the American InterContinental University – London.

All have close links with the host country in which they find themselves. This is reflected in their curricular offerings that usually have a strong emphasis on the culture and institutions of the country itself. The faculties of some of the colleges and universities contain a high proportion of nationals from the host country; 80% of the faculty of the American College of Greece, for example, are Greek nationals.

Most of the institutions place great emphasis on area studies – the history, literature, art, politics and sociology of the host country, but in recent years they have increased their course offerings in business studies and economics, areas in which the independent colleges have always been exceptionally strong.

All of these colleges and universities now offer full four-year Bachelor degrees. Some of the institutions offer a number of attractive internship opportunities in such diverse fields as politics, teaching, business, computing and

art history, but these opportunities are available primarily to the upper division students. Several now offer advanced degrees, especially the MBA, which attract substantial numbers of students from the host country.

The percentage of American students at these degree programs varies greatly from 7% to 95% and, partly as a result, the number of students on financial aid shows considerable variation. Generally speaking, where one of the institutions has a parent campus in the United States, financial aid for entering American freshmen is available if the necessary needs-based criteria are met. Most of the independent colleges such as the American University of Paris, Franklin College Switzerland, and Richmond in London, also have scholarships or financial aid packages available to both American and international students.

Some of the institutions have more than one campus. Webster University, for example, has four centres in Europe, while Richmond, The American International University in London, has two campuses in the London area and study centres in Italy and Japan. Several have their own dormitories on campus and place appropriate emphasis on the quality of student life through facilities and policies. Those that do not offer on-campus accommodation have access to hostels and will assist students to find suitable lodgings.

Accreditation

All of the colleges are members of the Council of International Schools (CIS). In addition most have achieved US regional accreditation, either through their parent institution or independently. One institution is currently a candidate for US regional accreditation, and three hold government recognition from their host countries, but offer the American curriculum and are thus included here.

Faculty

The faculty of these institutions tends to be a mixture of young, enthusiastic and totally committed scholars from the host country, senior lecturers from nearby universities brought in on a part-time basis, and well-established faculty from the US who are committed to this very special blend of American and international education.

Transfer and Study Abroad Opportunities

Some students may be aiming to spend one or two years before transferring to a university in the United States. These colleges and universities can serve as a useful bridge, allowing the student to continue in a familiar environment while adjusting to the demands of college life. All of the institutions offer a liberal arts curriculum which, being typically geared to the general education requirements, enable the student to take a range of courses in the humanities, the social sciences and the natural sciences. A student may thus contemplate transfer to a college or university in the United States confident in the knowledge that many of the conventional first year courses have already been taken.

Students from the US and other parts of the world may also transfer into these institutions in their second or third year of studies. Also, most of these institutions offer study abroad and internships opportunities for students from US based universities and colleges, as well as visiting students from other university systems. Many offer summer sessions open to short-term visiting students.

Summary

In summary, the US four-year degree granting colleges and universities outside the US constitute an attractive option for many school leavers. Many of these institutions associate together in several ventures. Several of these colleges and universities regularly travel together to CIS and ECIS schools to promote the option of US education. The organization AAICU (The Association of American International Colleges and Universities) to which many of these colleges and universities belong has regular meetings of administrators and faculty and strives to ensure the maintenance of the highest possible standards among its members.