



University and College Counseling Handbook

2022-2023

An overview of our programme for supporting students in Grades 9-12 with accessing various post-secondary pathways.



[aba_uni_admissions](#)

Guiding Principles of the Counseling Programme

The work of the University and College Counselor at ABA is aligned with the school's Mission, Vision and Values

Mission: Empowering Students to Make Informed Choices

We provide students with quality information about Higher Education and career options so that they can make choices which involve exploring their passions whilst contributing meaningfully to society and achieving personal fulfillment.

Vision: Providing Personalized Support for All

Students receive ongoing advice from Grade 9 -12 which allows them: to have a better understanding of themselves as learners and as people who relate to others in the world; to know under which conditions they will flourish; to understand the world-wide study options that are open to them; and to be thoroughly prepared for the application process. The counseling department will also provide advice and support for those students who do not wish to make a direct entry to university. Students are encouraged to consider their wider options such as taking a Gap Year, exploring creative or vocational courses, or undertaking an apprenticeship.

Values: working with Students and Families

While it is anticipated that students will ultimately make the choice and follow a pathway that is in line with their various skills, talents and aptitude, the process for career and university planning should ideally involve families. Decisions about where and what students leave home to study need to be discussed together.

CLASS OF 2022



Overview of University and College Focus by Grade Level

Grade Level	Focus	Important Dates
Grade 9	<p>Should concentrate on doing well in their subjects: Students applying to the US, Canada, Singapore, India, Hong-Kong and Europe will need to submit a transcript that shows their Semester 1 & 2 grades.</p> <p>-Will look at Learning Styles and Careers Clusters in advisory classes.</p> <p>-Students wanting to go to highly competitive universities should discuss strategies with their counselor. If their destination is the US, they must start preparing for the SAT; if it's the UK, then they start to build a portfolio of reading. If wanting to study medicine or Veterinary science students should consider volunteering during the summer holidays.</p>	No deadlines for Grade 9
Grade 10	<p>-Continue paying attention to grades.</p> <p>-Option to take PSAT for US-bound students</p> <p>-Take Careers Survey/ Test Interquest/ Interest, Personality and Work Environment tests on Unifrog</p> <p>-Will make DP or Course Subject Choices after meeting with Counselor and/or Assistant Principal</p> <p>-Work Experience week for Grade 10s</p> <p>-Students for competitive US universities take PSAT and study for SATs or ACTs</p>	<p>-October</p> <p>-February</p> <p>-March: DP subject choices</p> <p>-End of May Work Experience</p> <p>-independently/ Tuesdays in school</p>
Grade 11	<p>-Begin process of choosing their country of study and subject area. Students and parents meet with the counselor to discuss intentions.</p> <p>-US bound students should take PSAT</p> <p>-Students applying for competitive universities should consider taking SAT in May</p> <p>- Proof of English language proficiency may be required for some students. Consider taking the IELTS or TOEFL.</p> <p>-US bound students should take SAT revision</p> <p>-First draft of Personal Statement / Essay</p> <p><i>-Students applying for Early Action (US) or UK programmes with earlier deadlines should draft Common App Essay before starting Gr12</i></p>	<p>January – March</p> <p>October</p> <p>-Tuesdays after school</p> <p>-End of May, after exams</p> <p>-Finish over the summer holidays</p>
Grade 12	<p>Students apply to universities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● UK and US applications open ● Dentistry, Medicine, Oxbridge, Vet Science all UK have to submit early applications ● US Colleges Early Decision or Early Action ● Most universities in the Northern Hemisphere will have application portals open from Nov. ● Regular decision for most colleges and universities in UK and US ● Canadian, UK, US Colleges will begin to give offers / acceptances ● If applying to the Southern hemisphere, students will apply with their IB actual grades. 	<p>September</p> <p>October 15</p> <p>October (check with individual colleges)</p> <p>November</p> <p>January 1 – 15</p> <p>February – April</p> <p>July</p>

Overview of the application processes for universities and colleges across the world

<i>*=recommended</i>	USA - see map	Canada - see map	UK - see map	Australia - see map	New Zealand - see map	Netherlands - see map	Germany - see map
Common Application platform?	CommonApp or Coalition not for California	OUAC (Ontario) or direct application	UCAS Info: UK University Guide	UAC for Aus/NZ citizens - Others: direct to institution	Direct to institution See MyStudyNZ	Studielink	Uni-Assist or direct to uni
Application form	Yes - online	Yes - Online Direct for non-Ontario	Yes - online Buzzword: ABA2020	Yes - University website	Yes - University website	Yes - online	Yes - online
Length of UG courses	4 years	3 years for most	3 years	3 - 4 years	3 years	3 - 4 years	3 - 4 years
University choices	Up to 20 (8 is ideal)	N/A	Max 5, (4 for Med)	N/A	N/A	Maximum 4	N/A
Academics	School transcript (9-12) DP Predicted Grades <i>*ACT/SAT I or SAT II</i>	DP Predicted Grades (incl TOK & EE) Hard copy required	DP Predicted Grades MYP Grades Music exams, IA	School transcript <i>*DP exam results</i> ATAR conversion	School transcript <i>*DP exam results</i>	High School Diploma School transcript Predicted grades	School transcript
English proficiency?	<i>*IELTS or TOEFL</i>	<i>*IELTS or TOEFL</i>	<i>*IELTS or TOEFL</i>	Evidence required	<i>*IELTS or TOEFL</i>	Dutch/English	German/English
Extended writing:	Common App Essay (650 words, response to chosen prompt) - Tips	<i>*Letter of intent for some</i>	Personal Statement (4000 characters: Justify candidacy for chosen course)	Statement of purpose for some universities Note: GTE Requirement	Statement of purpose CV	Letter of Motivation , CV - for some institutions	Letter of Motivation CV
Recommendations	Teacher LOR x 2 Counsellor LOR	Not usually required for UG	Short reference from 3 or 4 teachers, to be included in Counsellor Reference	Teacher LOR - optional for some	Teacher LoR x 3	Teacher / Principal LoR	LoR (2 - 3)
Special consideration	Extra-curricular activities Summer experiences	Extra-curricular activities Ongoing learning	Lots of examples of skills, aptitude	Student visa info Health Cover: OSHC	Study in NZ <i>*Work experience</i>	Extra-curricular, leadership (recent)	Certified docs by post
Finance	Tuition - variable, check scholarship options	Comparatively lower tuition	Tuition: lower for UK, EU nationals	Cost - variable	Cost - variable	Lower fees for EU nationals	<i>*Free tuition</i> Admin fees only
Application deadlines	Early Decision: Nov 1 Regular Decision: Jan 1	Regular Decision: Jan	Medicine etc: Oct 15 General: Jan 15	Variable (Feb/July intake)	Varies for each uni (check individually)	January 15	January 15
Highly Ranked: examples (no particular order)	Stanford, MIT, Brown, Columbia, Cornell, CIT, Dartmouth, UPen, U of Chicago, Princeton, Harvard, Yale, CalTech, John Hopkins, Duke	UBC (Vancouver); McGill (Montreal); Waterloo, U of Toronto, McMaster, U of Montreal, Ottawa or Alberta; Western	Oxford, Cambridge, Imperial College London, UCL, LSE, Edinburgh, King's College London, Manchester, Warwick	Uni of Melbourne, Australia National University, University of Sydney, University of Queensland	Uni of Auckland, Uni of Otago, Auckland U of T, Canterbury, Victoria Uni of Wellington, Massey University	Delft Uni of Technology; Wageningen Uni; Uni of Amsterdam; Leiden; Erasmus Rotterdam and Utrecht	LMU Munich; Technical Univ of Munich; Heidelberg Uni; Humboldt Uni Berlin

Other Countries: Europe ([Ireland](#), [France](#), [Spain](#), [Italy](#), [Switzerland](#), [Sweden](#), [Norway](#), [Turkey](#)); Middle East ([Jordan](#), [Lebanon](#), [UAE](#), [Qatar](#)); Asia ([China](#), [Malaysia](#), [Singapore](#), [Japan](#)); Africa ([South Africa](#)); S. America ([Brazil](#), [Chile](#), [Colombia](#))
Useful websites: [BridgeU](#), [UniFrog](#), [World Univ Rankings](#), [QS Univ Rankings](#), [NSS UK](#), [Study Portals](#), [IDP](#), [Which University](#), [YouStudy](#), [College Wise](#), [College Vine](#), [College Board](#), [Prep Scholar](#), [Kaplan](#), [TS College Tours](#), [PreCollege](#)
Financial Aid: [General USA](#) - [NAFSA](#), [IEFA](#), [CollegeXpress](#), [Scholarships](#) Canada - [EduPass](#), [Scholarships](#), [WES UK](#) - [Save The Student](#), Europe - [Scholarships](#), Asia - [Singapore](#), [China](#), [Japan](#), [Hong Kong](#), [CUHK](#), [Australia](#), [StudyAssist](#)

Applying to the United Kingdom – Further Information

Academic Programmes

The UK offers a vast range of post-secondary education courses. There will be something to suit every interest, but for the most part these are specialist degree courses. Undergraduate study in the UK takes three years (four years in Scotland), one year less than in both the US and Canada. Students applying to the UK need to make sure they take the correct combination of subjects to meet entry requirements. While entry requirements are specific to each institution, there are some general points to bear in mind: students should meet the Math and Science requirements if they are thinking of studying any Science subject, Economics, Engineering or Psychology. The most competitive science and engineering courses will want to see Math taken at Higher Level. Students applying for direct entry onto degree courses will apply through UCAS, which is the central organizing body for applications: www.ucas.com

Foundation Courses

Students may also apply for Foundation Courses which provide a preparatory period of study for students who may not have either the grades, or the correct subject combination, or perhaps the language ability (less likely at ABA) for direct entry. The foundation course is normally one year long, and if students progress well through the course (maintaining something in the order of 75% in their regular assessments), they will automatically be admitted onto the degree programme of their choice. Foundation courses represent a very effective route through to a highly ranked university. Some foundation courses can be applied for online through UCAS, but many have a direct application through the university's website.

Application Requirements for Students

Steps	Deadlines	Notes
Request a short reference from three or four of your teachers. These teachers should be able to speak about your skills, interest, and suitability for the course you have applied to.	June	Fill out the form that the school provides, noting what you are applying to study, which universities you want to apply to and include any relevant information you would like your teacher to refer to.
Set up an account with UCAS. You will need a username, password, school e-mail and school 'buzzword' (ask Ms. Jinane for this). Fill in as many general details as possible, including contact details and educational qualifications. Enter all MYP grades, any music exams and International Award certificates.	September	Applicants who are hoping to be characterized as EU status should list their home in the UK or EU as their permanent address, and collate any evidence that shows the UK as their permanent home. Their Muscat address as their postal address.
Browse courses in UCAS, looking at course descriptions and entry requirements.	End of Grade 11, summer break Aug & Sep (Grade 12)	Students should keep track of their research on a spreadsheet or something similar. This information will come in handy as they write their personal statements.
Enter universities you are interested in by creating a college list on Unifrog, then discuss with your college counselor. Finally choose 5 and enter into UCAS under course choices.	September	Aim to shortlist 6 – 8 universities. You will eventually choose 5 universities. 1 or 2 'reach' schools, 2 schools that lie comfortably within your grade range, and 1 or 2 safety choices.
Improve upon the first draft of the personal statement. It is normal to submit 3, 4 or more drafts until you are completely happy with it. Make sure your counselor or another member of staff reads it too. Upload it to UCAS	Late September, early October.	You are mainly looking to provide evidence that you understand the challenges of the course you are applying for, and that you have the skills, ability and aptitude to be successful. Give lots of relevant examples of why you are a strong applicant.
Medicine, Dentistry, Vet Science and Oxbridge must apply early and prepare for specialist tests.	October 15 is the deadline for applications.	There are particular entrance tests for Medicine and Dentistry (UKCAT, or BMAT), and for Law (LNAT) and for some Oxford and Cambridge applications. Mostly, these are taken at the British Council in October or November.
Send application as early as possible before the deadline	January 25 is the deadline.	The earlier you can get this off the better.

Applying to the United States – Further Information

The US offers 4-year Undergraduate Courses

The US offers a vast range of post-secondary education courses – there are over 4,000 Universities and Colleges in the US. Colleges only offer undergraduate degrees and all Universities offer post-graduate qualifications (Masters and PhDs). Students applying to the US will mostly need to complete standardized tests and a language proficiency test to meet entry requirements. While there are some US Universities that do not require the ACT or SAT for entry, the vast majority still do, and therefore a decision to apply to the US should be accompanied by a determined approach to studying for the SAT or ACT.

Students applying to the US will normally apply through the Common Application process (www.commonapp.org) which is the most widely used application system in the US. The alternative is the Coalition Application process, which 150 US Universities are signed up with (www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org/). The Coalition App allows for slightly more flexibility in what students can supply as evidence in support of their applications, but they are both equally efficient and user friendly. The good thing is that students get started on the administrative side of their applications in Grade 11, therefore reducing the stress in Grade 12!

Application Requirements

1. A completed Common App or Coalition Application, which will include:
2. A thoughtful, carefully written essay of 650 words (Titles available on Common App website).
3. A school transcript showing semester grades from each subject area from Grades 9 - 12.
4. ACT or SAT (good to have even if not required).
5. Proof of Language Proficiency IELTS or TOEFL.
6. Predicted Grades of the IB DP or IB Courses.
7. At least 2 Teacher recommendations and 1 Counselor recommendation.
8. A set of strong extra-curricular activities, summer experiences or ongoing learning where possible.

What does it take to get into a Highly Selective University in the US

Highly selective universities which include such colleges as Stanford, MIT as well as the Ivy Leagues (Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, University of Pennsylvania, Princeton, Harvard and Yale) are extraordinarily difficult to get into because the admission rates are very small (particularly for international schools). While anybody can apply, it is worth bearing in mind certain essential factors to ensure that the application is not a waste of the admission fee. It is important to know that it is not enough to be best in the class, or best in your school – to be admitted to highly selective universities you need to be 'Best in the World' in a particular area.

- ✓ Best to make the university your clear favorite and apply Early Decision (ED). Ensure you know the college inside out. Visit if at all possible!
- ✓ Make sure you already have excellent SAT scores to send in late September or Early October. See www.collegeboard.org for testing dates. 1500 /1600 would be a low cut off.
- ✓ Make sure you have taken an IELTS or TOEFL language test (www.idpielts.me)
- ✓ Your GPA should be in the region of 6.5 or above – your transcript should be predominantly filled with 7s (the odd 6 won't count against you *too much*)
- ✓ Spend your summers learning new courses, skills, or consolidating old ones.
- ✓ Decide what your 'Unique Selling Point' or distinguishing skill /virtue is going to be and work to show how that sets you apart from others.
- ✓ Read widely and avariciously – this is the best way to expose yourself to superior writing that will inform your own style on the Common App Essay.

Timeline for Applying to the United States

Steps	Timeframe	Notes
Make yourself familiar with the ACT standardized tests: www.act.org or SAT tests: www.sat.org	Grade 10, early in Grade 11.	Khan Academy provide excellent practice tests and exercises: https://www.khanacademy.org/ You can also find up to 8 Practice Tests on the SAT website.
Sign up for SAT or ACT practice tests on the relevant site: https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/register_or_https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act-registration.html	Feb / March of Grade 11 for the first test, then plan to take one or two more. Your best score will be sent to universities.	SAT and ACT Test Dates can be found online on collegeboard.com and ACT.ORG Test Centres: ISO, Choueifat School, Indian Schools (Ghubra, Muscat).
Meet University Counselor to begin to think about what kind of university campus you are interested in; indicate any particular highly selective universities you are interested in. Discuss whether an Early Decision or Early Action application would be beneficial for you.	Feb / March of Grade 11	Applying ED (Oct/Nov) to ONE college means that you must attend that university if accepted. Applying EA means you can apply to other unis but will hear earlier whether or not you have been accepted.
Take an English Proficiency Exam: IELTS or TOEFL These are not difficult as intended for EAL students but you should still look at practice tests online and do a little bit of serious preparation.	Any time in Grade 11 is good.	www.idpielts.me https://www.ets.org/toefl
Request a letter of recommendation from 2 - 4 teachers (check university requirements). Provide a CV or detailed list of achievements. Teachers should be able to speak to both your academic achievement, potential as well as your character.	June - September	Fill out ABA letter of recommendation form. You should note the universities - if highly selective or applying ED or AD you should say what makes you an excellent match for that university.
Start your application through the Common App or Coalition. Begin the first draft of your essay. This will probably need three or four iterations. It is really important so give it plenty of time!	May - June	Share with family or friends for input but tell your own story and tell it from your heart. Do not be tempted to let others have too much influence.
Finish your application and submit it early. The deadline is usually December / January (between Dec 15th - January 15th) but aim to have it completed by October. You will shine simply by being early!	September - December	Pay special attention to grammar and spelling and make sure every section is filled in with as much detail as possible.

ABA has a history of sending students to universities all over the world. Below is a list of University destinations for ABA students (2012 – 2022)

<p> AUSTRALIA</p> <p>Deakin University Griffith University James Cook University La Trobe University Monash University Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University of Melbourne University of New South Wales University of Queensland University of Sydney University of Western Australia</p> <p> CANADA</p> <p>Bishops University Brock University Carleton University Concordia University Dalhousie University Emily Carr University of Art and Design McGill University Mount Allison University Ontario College of Art and Design Queen's University Seneca College St. Francis Xavier University St. Mary's College Thompson Rivers University Trent University University of Alberta University of British Columbia University of Calgary University of Guelph University of Lethbridge University of Ottawa University of Saskatchewan University of Toronto University of Waterloo University of Western Ontario Vancouver Island University Wilfrid Laurier University York University</p>	<p> FRANCE</p> <p>Ecole Camondo Institut Robin Chateau de Bellerive Sciences Po Universite Michel de Montaigne Bordeaux Universite Pantheon-Assas Universite de Rennes</p> <p> NETHERLANDS</p> <p>Amsterdam University College Delft University of Technology Eindhoven University of Technology Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam Haagse Hogeschool HAN University of Applied Sciences Holland University of Applied Sciences Hotel Management School Maastricht Maastricht University NHL Stenden University of Applied Science University College Maastricht University of Amsterdam University of Groningen University of Maastricht Vrije Universiteit</p> <p> SWITZERLAND</p> <p>Ecole Polytechnique Federale Lausanne Glion Hotel School International Management Institute University IFM University of Zurich</p> <p> UNITED KINGDOM</p> <p>Aberystwyth University Art Institute at Bournemouth City and Guilds of London Art School City University, London Durham University Edinburgh Napier University London School of Economics London Southbank University Loughborough University Newcastle University Oxford Brookes University Plymouth College of Art and Design</p>	<p>Queen Mary University of London Robert Gordon University Roehampton University Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Royal Holloway, University of London Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama Southampton Solent University Swansea University University College London University of Aberdeen University of the Arts London University of Bath University of Birmingham University of Bradford University of Dundee University of East Anglia University of Edinburgh University of Exeter University of Glasgow University of Hull University of Kent University of Leeds University of Manchester University of Nottingham University of Oxford University of Portsmouth University of Reading University of Salford University of Sheffield University of St. Andrews University of Southampton University of Stirling University of Strathclyde University of Sussex University of the West of England, Bristol University of the West of Scotland University of Winchester University of York University of Westminster, London</p> <p> UNITED STATES OF AMERICA</p> <p>ALAS Aviation School Auburn University American Musical and Dramatic Academy Babson University Bennington College Bentley University</p>	<p>Boston University Bryant College Carnegie Mellon University College of Charleston College of William and Mary Columbia University Dakota Wesleyan University Fisher College Florida State University Georgia Institute of Technology Georgia State University Iowa State University Mairst College Michigan State University Northeastern University Oberlin College Ohio State University Otis College of Art and Design Parsons The New School for Design Pennsylvania State University Princeton University Purdue University Rochester Institute of Technology Rutgers, State University of New Jersey Savannah College of Art & Design (SCAD) St. Ambrose University SUNY Buffalo SUNY Cortland Stanford University Texas A&M University Tufts University University of Arizona University of the Arts University of California-Berkeley University of Houston University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign University of North Florida University of North Texas University of Oklahoma University of Pennsylvania University of San Diego University of South Florida University of Southern California University of Washington Vassar College Virginia Polytechnic Institute</p>	<p> WORLDWIDE</p> <p>ACMT Dubrovnik (Croatia) American University Beirut (Lebanon) American University of Cairo (Egypt) American University Dubai (UAE) American University Sharjah (UAE) Amity Delhi (India) Auckland University of Tech (New Zealand) Birla Institute of Tech and Science (Oman) FTE, Flight Training Europe (Spain) Georgetown University (Qatar) IE University (Spain) Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Belgium) Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (Korea) Kyoto University (Japan) Monash University (Malaysia) Nanyang Tech University (Singapore) National University of Singapore Norwegian University of Science and Technology (Norway) Notre Dame University (Lebanon) Rhodes University (South Africa) RWTH Aachen University (Germany) SP Jain School of Global Management (Singapore) Sri Ramachandra Medical College (India) SSR Medical College (Mauritius) Steden University (South Africa) Stellenbosch University (South Africa) Sun Yat-Sen University (China) Taylor's University (Malaysia) University St. Gallen (Germany) University College Dublin (Ireland) University of Auckland (New Zealand) University of Buckingham (Budapest) University of Cape Town (South Africa) University of Otago (New Zealand) University of Pretoria (South Africa) University of Stavanger (Norway) Victoria University (New Zealand) Waseda University (Japan)</p>
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