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# U.S. College Preparation at GISSV

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German International School  
of Silicon Valley

# Overview

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- Graduation Requirements & A-G
- Dual Diploma Advantages
- Transcripts
- Advanced Placement
- Standardized Testing (pSAT, SAT)
- Types of U.S. Colleges and Universities



# International Abitur / Dual Diploma Advantage

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- Access to universities worldwide
  - Uncomplicated admission to German universities
  - Opportunities in other countries with English-speaking programs, (UK, The Netherlands)
  - **Application to U.S. colleges and universities with high school diploma including extensive coursework plus AP courses**
- Small class sizes, strong relationships in community
- Focus on critical thinking, presentation, project-based learning
- **Rigor of the curriculum**





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# Requirements for U.S. Colleges start in Grade 9

Our graduation requirements are well above what is required for university admissions across the US and beyond, making GISSV students very competitive in the university admission process.

US selective universities require 4 years in each content, GISSV students automatically obtain these via the Abitur.



# Graduation Requirements

Minimum Requirements for the German International Abitur (DIA)		Minimum A-G Requirements for the University of CA	
4 years	English	4 years	English
4 years	German	2 years (3 rcmd)	Language other than English
4 years	a third language	3 years (4 rcmd)	Mathematics
4 years	Mathematics	2 years (3 rcmd)	Laboratory Science
2–4 years	three sciences: Physics, Chemistry, Biology	2 years	History/Social Science
4 years	one or more sciences	1 year	Visual and Performing
4 years	History and Social Science	1 year	College-Preparatory Electives
4 years	Ethics		
1 year	Geography		
4 years	Visual Arts		
1 semester	Music		
4 years	Physical Education		

Resources:

[A-G Information Link](#)

[Applying to the UCs](#)



# Transcripts

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- Lists all classes and grades starting in 9th grade
- Does not include your activities or test scores
- German grades (1-6 and 0-15) are converted to US letter grades (A-F)
- Classes receive credits according to the number of hours taught
- contains your cumulative grade point average (GPA) for all four years of high school
  - *unweighted GPA*
  - *weighted GPA*
- A transcript is sent to all colleges and universities



# SCOIR

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SCOIR is a platform currently used by GISSV for the university application process. Here is what it is used for:

- Connected to more than 1450 colleges and universities with statistics related to admission, entry requirements, cost, majors offered, etc. for students to research
- Create university lists
- All counselor and teacher documents sent via Scoir for universities accepting documents digitally – letters of recommendation, school profile, reports, transcripts, etc.
- Career and personality test and report available
- Career searches with all data provided related to outlook, salary, degree requirements, etc.



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# College Admission Criteria

- GPA in all courses
- Rigor of the school's curriculum and the student's course list (Honors, AP)
- Extracurricular involvement (demonstrated leadership, a sense of social responsibility, a commitment to service)
- Special talents, awards, and achievements (including internships)
  - Teacher and Counselor Recommendation
  - Personal statements / essays
  - (Standardized tests)





# Advanced Placement



- enables students to pursue college-level studies while in high school.
- can lead to college credit OR ADVANCED PLACEMENT depending on qualifying exam grades.
- colleges in the US and around the world determine the credit they will award (usually a score of 3, 4 or 5)
- Exams take place in May and are hosted by GISSV

GISSV offers as part of the students' coursework:

- AP German
- AP English Language
- AP English Literature
- AP French Language
- AP Spanish Language
- AP Computer Science Principles

Pending enrollment, GISSV offers these additional AP courses:

- AP Chemistry
- AP Microeconomics
- AP Music Theory
- AP Biology
- AP Calculus



# Standardized Tests @ GISSV

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The SAT takes three hours and consists of three tests: (1) the Reading Test, (2) the Writing and Language Test, and (3) the Math Test.

- pSAT (all students in grade 10)
- pSAT / NMSQT
- SAT School Day in fall (for grade 12) and spring (for grade 11)

[More information on SAT](#)

Other widely recognized standardized test option:  
[ACT](#)



# The College Search

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- Citizenship
- Cost / Financial Aid
- Culture (Location)
- Anticipated Major / Special Programs
- Data (job/grad school placement, graduation & retention rates, etc.)
  - US News, but also [collegesofdistinction.com](http://collegesofdistinction.com)
  - [www.ctcl.org](http://www.ctcl.org)
- Fit over prestige
- Selectivity/Requirements - Be realistic.

The college search can begin as early as grade 9 by developing a four-year plan and planning accordingly.

## **Additional things to consider:**

Extracurricular activities

Volunteer

Internships

Summer courses/programs



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# What's Out There?

Liberal Arts Colleges & Research Universities  
California State Universities (CSU)  
University of California (UC)  
Community Colleges



# Liberal Arts College & Research University

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- 90% private
  - **Undergraduate** education is the primary mission
  - **Focus** on broad skills in thinking and writing, not narrow pre professional skills.
  - **Smaller classes** taught by faculty members
  - **Student life** centers around college
- $\frac{2}{3}$  public and  $\frac{1}{3}$  private
  - involved in **research and public service as well as teaching** graduates and undergraduates
  - Size ranges from small (Cal Tech) to medium (Harvard) to very large (University of Texas)
  - larger classes; faculty teach fewer classes; teaching assistants for smaller discussion groups.

<https://www.niche.com/colleges/search/best-liberal-arts-colleges/s/california/>

<https://blog.prepscholar.com/what-is-a-research-university>





# University of California (UC)

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A public university system and part of the state's three tier public higher education system which includes the UC, CSU (CA State Universities) and CCC (CA Community Colleges)



## California State University (CSU)



UC Berkeley

UCLA

UCSD

UCSB

UCSC

UC Irvine

UC Davis

UC Riverside

23 campuses in California  
(San Jose State)

# California Community College

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*Largest system of higher education in the world serving more than 2.9 million students in CA*

## Benefits

- High School Diploma sufficient
- No standardized tests required.
- Low tuition (sometimes even none!)
- after 2 years, students can transfer to a 4-year college
- also offers 2 year associate degrees in specialized fields
- flexibility in schedules for working students.



# Specialized Programs

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- Colleges for the Arts
- Religious Colleges
- Historically Black Colleges
- Women's Colleges
- Cooperative Colleges
- Polytechnic Universities



**Julliard**

**University of Notre Dame**

**Howard University**

**Smith, Wellesley**

**Rochester Institute of  
Technology**

**CalPoly**





# High School Info Night No.2



German International School  
of Silicon Valley

## Information on College Counseling Applying to Highly Selective Universities

Marcea Eckhardt, College Counselor Consultant ([meckhardt@gissv.org](mailto:meckhardt@gissv.org))



Tuesday, December 6, 2022



**So... You Think  
You Want To  
Apply To Highly  
Selective  
Universities?**

**Presented  
by Marcea  
Eckhardt**



Applying to College is a  
Match to be Made  
- Not a Prize to be Won



How many GISSV students has the counsellor got into Highly Selective Universities in the last 5 years?

0

Students get themselves in. They should receive the credit. They studied hard for many years. They discovered their preferences and personality traits, completed the university research, and completed the applications.

The counselor does not get students into universities. Students are guided and supported in the process.

# Selectivity Funnel

**2,719** 4-Year US Colleges (Public and Private)

**300+** Colleges typically featured in school guides

## Over 50% Admitted

Adelphi, Albion, Univ of MA - Amherst, UC Davis, UC Santa Cruz, UC Riverside, CSUs, Univ Oregon, Oregon State, UC Boulder, Colorado State, Univ Washington, Whittier, Lewis & Clark, Univ of Arizona, Arizona State, Prescott, Boston Univ, Brigham Young, Case Western Reserve, Clemson, Univ Alabama, Drexel, Depauw, DePaul, Penn State, Purdue, SUNY, Univ Wisconsin, Univ Missouri

## 26% - 50% Admitted

Boston College, UT Austin, WUC San Diego, UC Santa Barbara, UC Irvine, CalPoly, San Diego State, San Jose State, Chapman, Harvey Mudd, Loyola Marymount, Occidental, Pepperdine, Santa Clara, Scripps, Colorado College, Reed, Whitman, American, Bard, Baylor, Boston College, Brandeis, Bryn Mawr, Bucknell, Carnegie Mellon, Colby, Davidson, Dickinson, Drexel, Emory, Fordham, George Washington, McGill, Kenyon, Lehigh, Univ Michigan, NYU, UNC, Northeastern, Oberlin, RISD, Skidmore, Smith, Emory, Trinity, Tulane, Villanova, Wake Forest, Wellesley, Wesleyan

## 13% - 25% Admitted

UC Berkeley, UCLA, CalTech, Claremont, Bates, Duke, McKenna, USC, Pomona, Pitzer, Amherst, Barnard, Bowdoin, Carleton, Colgate, Univ Chicago, Georgetown, Haverford, Johns Hopkins, Middlebury, Northwestern, Notre Dame, Rice, Swarthmore, Tufts, Vanderbilt, Vassar, UVA, Washington Univ SL, Williams



**Highly Selective**

# The Ivy League



# Number of Applications VS Number of Acceptances

## Class of 2025

Ivy League Colleges	Overall Accept. Rate	Regular Decision Accept. Rate	Regular Decision Apps Accepted	Regular Decision Apps Received	Early Decision / Action Accept. Rate	% of Class Filled by Early Apps	Early Decision / Action Apps Rcvd	Early Decision / Action Apps Accepted	Expected Number of Students to Enroll	Total Apps Received	Total Apps Accepted
Brown	5.4%	3.5%	1,652	41,028	15.9%	52.1%	5,540	885	1,700	46,568	2,537
Columbia	3.9%	3.2%	1,708	54,116	10.1%	43.5%	6,435	650	1,492	60,551	2,358
Cornell	8.7%	6.7%	3,922	58,363	21.4%	51.3%	9,017	1,930	3,765	67,380	5,852
Dartmouth	6.2%	4.5%	1,158	25,693	21.2%	51.4%	2,664	591	1,150	28,357	1,749
Harvard	3.4%	2.6%	1,223	47,349	7.4%	n/a*	10,086	747	1,665	57,435	1,970
Penn	5.7%	4.2%	2,008	48,371	14.9%	49.8%	7,962	1,194	2,400	56,333	3,202
Princeton	4.0%	4.0%	1,498	37,601	n/a#	n/a#	n/a#	n/a#	1,308	37,601	1,498
Yale	4.6%	3.4%	1,332	38,996	10.5%	n/a#	7,939	837	1,554	46,935	2,169

n/a\* = not applicable since an EA policy was in place

n/a# = not applicable since an EA / ED policy was not in place

NYP = not yet published



# STANFORD ADMISSION INFORMATION

Out of a pool of 55,471 applicants to Stanford's Class of 2025, the largest pool in the University's history, 2,190 received offers of admission, according to data released by the Office of Undergraduate Admissions. The data indicate an admit rate of 3.95%, which is a decrease from last years 5.19% admit rate.

<https://www.stanforddaily.com/2021/10/14/stanford-admit-rate-drops-to-record-low-3-95-for-the-class-of-2025/>

# STANFORD (CONTINUED)

## Class Overview

- 77 home countries and 49 US states are represented
- 12% are international citizens representing 72 countries
- 18% are first generation college students
- This year, 369 of the 2126 total enrolled first-year students were admitted in a previous year and deferred their entry to this fall.

# Highly Selective US Universities

**70-80% of the applicants  
who are rejected  
are excellent candidates**

Early **ACTION** & Early **DECISION**  
November 1, **BUT CHECK YOUR**  
**UNIVERSITY LIST FOR DEADLINES!**



# Early Action

- Similar to regular applications but done earlier
- Apply by November 1 and get a response in December
- **Not binding**
- Accept or reject their offer by May 1



# Single Choice Early Action

Harvard, Yale, Princeton and Stanford offer “Single Choice (or Restrictive) Early Action” where candidates are not allowed to apply to other schools during the early-action period only. However, once they receive EA (Early Action) decisions (mid-December), then applicants are free to apply elsewhere.

# Early Decision

- **Binding** - if admitted the student **MUST** attend
- Ultimate sign of demonstrated interest
- Only if you have a clear favorite/TOP school
- Only if you are willing to pay full fees
- Only if you are within reach academically
- November 1 Deadline (usually)
- ED II – Later...around Regular Decision deadline

# Early Decision

vs.

# Early Action

vs.

# Regular Decision

Apps typically due around Nov.  
Decisions sent out in Dec.

Apps due sometime in fall  
Decisions sent out Dec. - Feb.

Apps due between Jan. 1 - Feb. 1  
Decision dates vary

## PROS

- An early acceptance letter means the stressful process is over sooner!
- Schools know your commitment, so your chances can be (slightly) increased.

## CONS

- An acceptance is binding, and you must withdraw applications from other schools.
- Beware of senioritis: don't let your grades slip just because you got in early!

## DO THIS IF...

*You have one dream school*

## PROS

- You'll get an early decision, but it's not binding
- You don't need to withdraw your other applications if you're accepted

## CONS

- You still have to prepare your other applications, just in case—the Regular Decision deadline falls right after decisions are mailed out.

## DO THIS IF...

*You love one particular school, but still want to keep your options open*

## PROS

- Later deadlines mean you have longer to perfect your applications
- You aren't committed to any school, so it's perfect if you want to keep your options open

## CONS

- A large, general applicant pool means stiff competition
- You won't receive a decision until later, so you'll be on pins and needles for longer!

## DO THIS IF...

*You like a lot of schools, and want to weigh all of your options*

# CALIFORNIA ED I & II SCHOOLS

## California

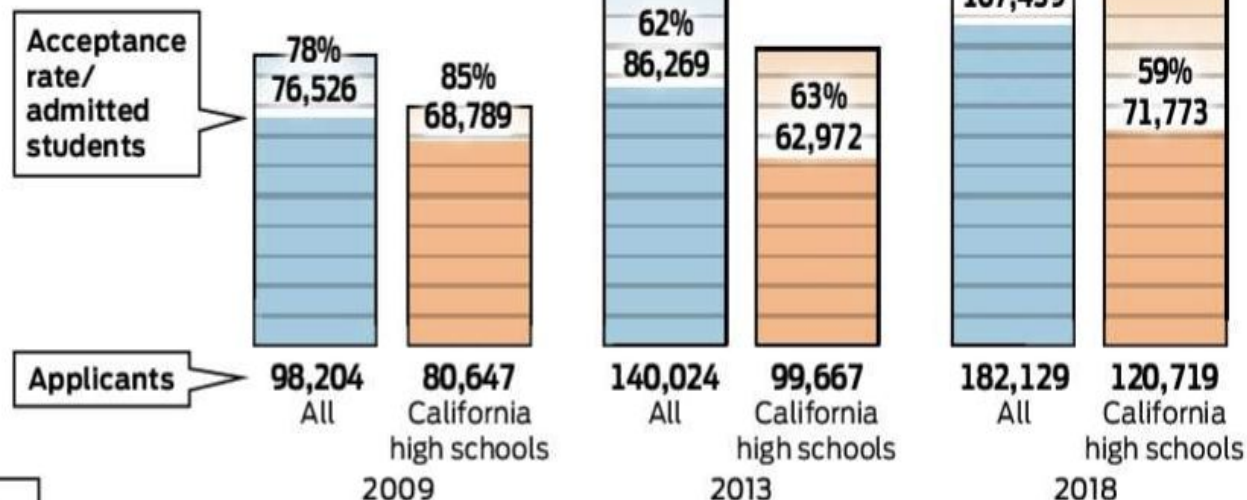
- [Claremont McKenna College](#)\*
- [Harvey Mudd College](#)\*
- [Loyola Marymount University](#)
- [Occidental College](#)\*
- [Pitzer College](#)\*
- [Pomona College](#)\*
- [Santa Clara University](#)\*
- [Scripps College](#)\*
- [University of San Francisco](#)

# UC admission rates

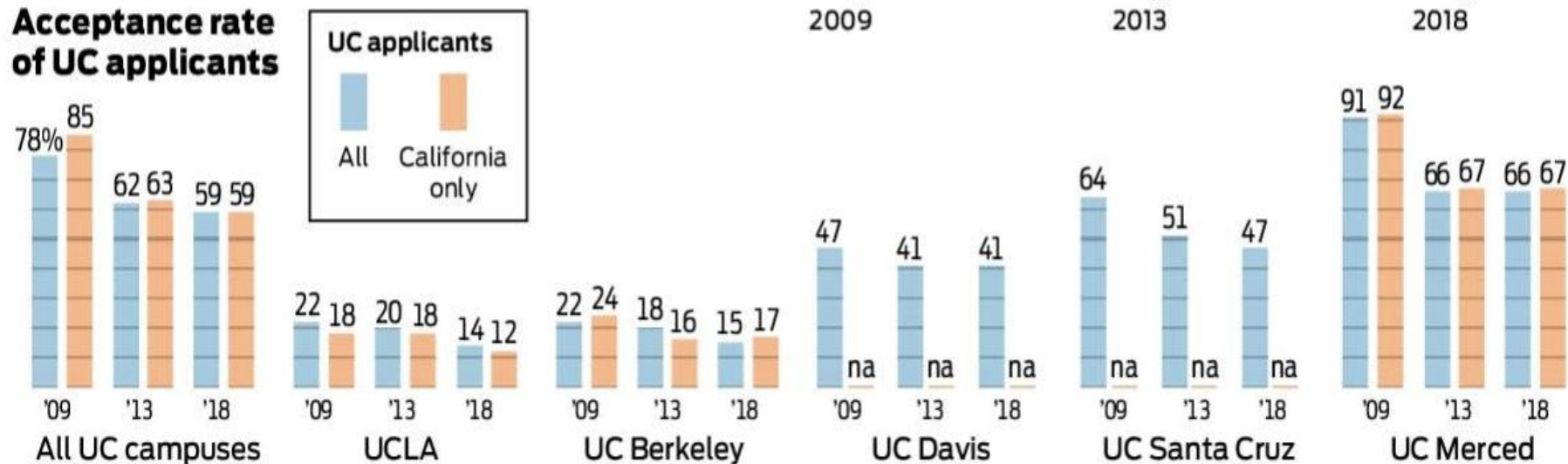
As more high school students have applied to the University of California in the last decade, UC campuses have become more selective. That means it's harder to get in for all applicants – and those from California. Here is a snapshot of how many students are applying, and the rates at which they are accepted.

## UC applicants

(Students may apply to more than one campus)



## Acceptance rate of UC applicants





# UC – INTERNATIONAL ADMISSIONS

Rank	Campus	Admit Rate (2021)	Admit Rate (2020)
1	Berkeley	8.2%	8.7%
2	Los Angeles	9.1%	9.3%
3	Santa Barbara	27.4%	31.7%
4	San Diego	30.9%	36.1%
5	Irvine	37.8%	44%
6	Merced	59.2%	58.9%
7	Davis	67.6%	60.1%
8	Riverside	74.1%	71.7%
9	Santa Cruz	70.2%	75.5%
Total		67.8%	71.1%

Source: [University of California Office of the President](#)



# UC ADMISSIONS – CALIFORNIA RESIDENTS

Rank	Campus	Admit Rate (2021)	Admit Rate (2020)
1	Los Angeles	9.9%	13.6%
2	Berkeley	16.9%	20.2%
3	Irvine	20.1%	22.7%
4	San Diego	28.5%	34.1%
5	Santa Barbara	28%	35.4%
6	Davis	39%	39.7%
7	Santa Cruz	54.5%	62%
8	Riverside	64%	65.4%
9	Merced	99.7%	93.7%
	Total	65.7%	70.6%

Source: [University of California Office of the President](#)

# What happens in the Admissions Office?





Holistic Evaluation by  
Committee for final selection

# Holistic Evaluation Defined

“Evaluation of the overall quality of the application by considering **various aspects** or components of the submission...”

# Everything Begins with Numbers

Only spend 3-8 minutes for initial review

- *Grades*
- *Predicted AP/Abi Scores if required*
- *Testing (SAT/ACT/Other)*
- *Rigor of high school program*

# High School Transcript

- Most Challenging Courses
- High grades in all  
Abitur/AP courses
- GPA
- External courses  
completed...UC Scout,  
etc.





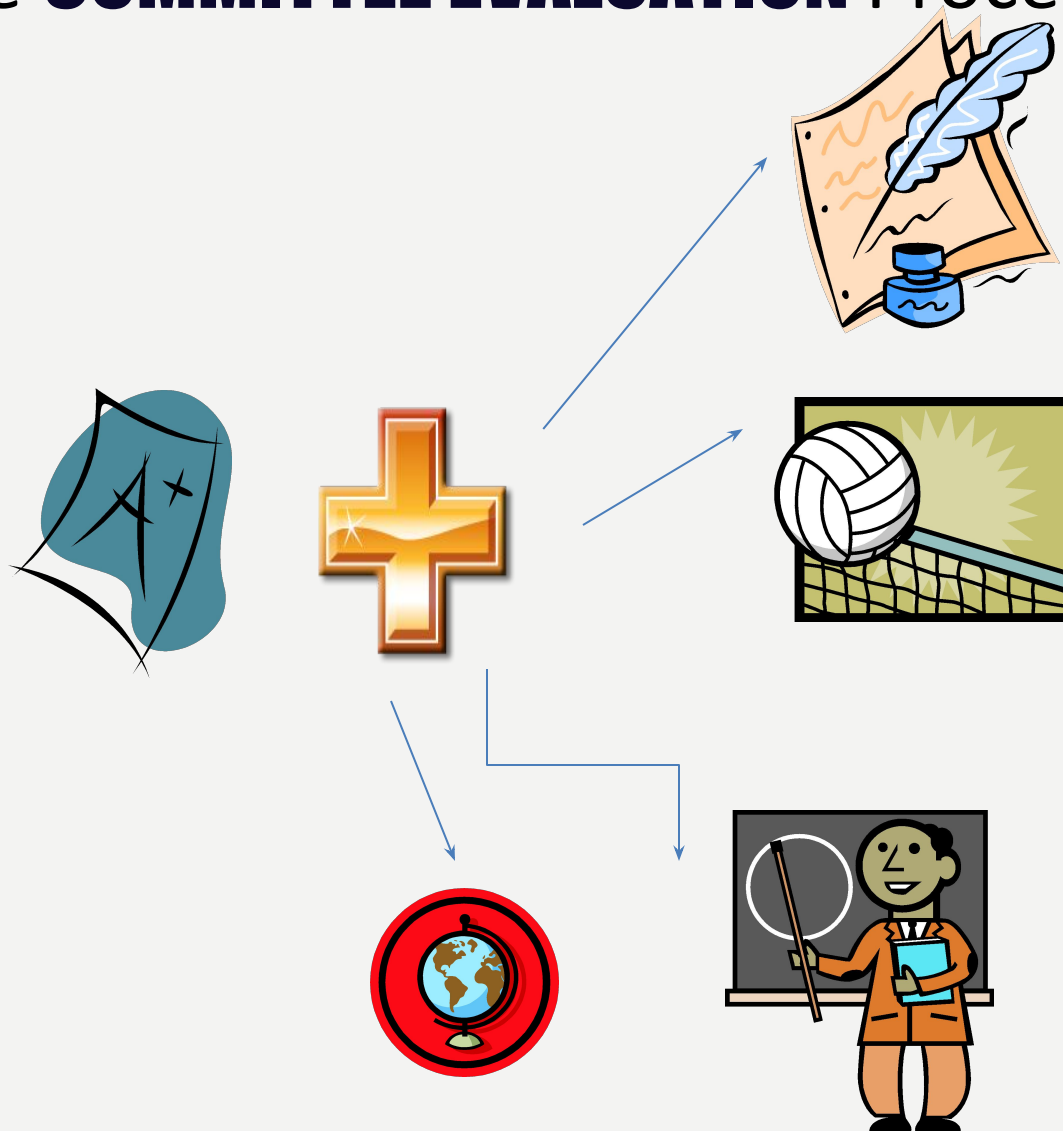
## Average SAT/ACT Total



School Names	<u>SAT 25th %ile Scores</u>			<u>SAT 75th %ile scores</u>		
	EBRW	Math	TOTAL	EBRW	Math	TOTAL
MIT	730	780	1510	780	800	1580
UChicago	730	770	1500	770	800	1570
Yale	720	740	1460	770	790	1560
Harvard	710	750	1460	770	800	1570
Princeton	710	740	1450	800	800	1600
Stanford	700	740	1440	770	800	1570
Columbia	710	740	1450	760	800	1550
UPenn	700	740	1440	760	800	1560
Dartmouth	710	730	1440	770	790	1560
Brown	700	720	1420	760	790	1550
Cornell	680	720	1400	760	800	1560
<b>Average</b>	<b>709</b>	<b>743</b>	<b>1451</b>	<b>770</b>	<b>797</b>	<b>1566</b>

Score data taken from [College Board](https://collegeboard.org); section scores may not add up to the total score.

# The **COMMITTEE EVALUATION** Process...



# **Holistic Evaluation:**

## **ACADEMIC POTENTIAL AND PERSONAL QUALITIES**

- Academics...transcript, predicted grades, etc.
- Purpose, Passion & Meaning
- Challenges Met & Overcome
- Character
- Leadership
- Teachability
- Contributions in developing positive Relationships with others

# EXTRACURRICULAR INVOLVEMENT

- Individual projects & research (Blogs, E-portfolios, research-based essays)
- Initiating and /or participating in sustained Community Service
- Doing an internship
- Starting a business
- Volunteering
- Completing summer university coursework
- Research



# Extra-Curricular

Present **Meaningful and Long-Standing** evidence  
of involvement in ECA's in and out of GISSV

More is not better

Depth before Breadth

**Go Beyond the required hours**

# Recommendations Teachers/Counselor



- Add and contribute to a positive classroom learning environment
- Adhere to Deadlines
- Be attentive and engaged in classroom learning
- Share your interests with your teachers/counselor
- Be a good role model
- Be accountable for your own learning
- Good people, who give back
- Communicate WHY engage in athletics, etc. and WHAT get out of them



# Demonstrated Interest

Why is this so important now?

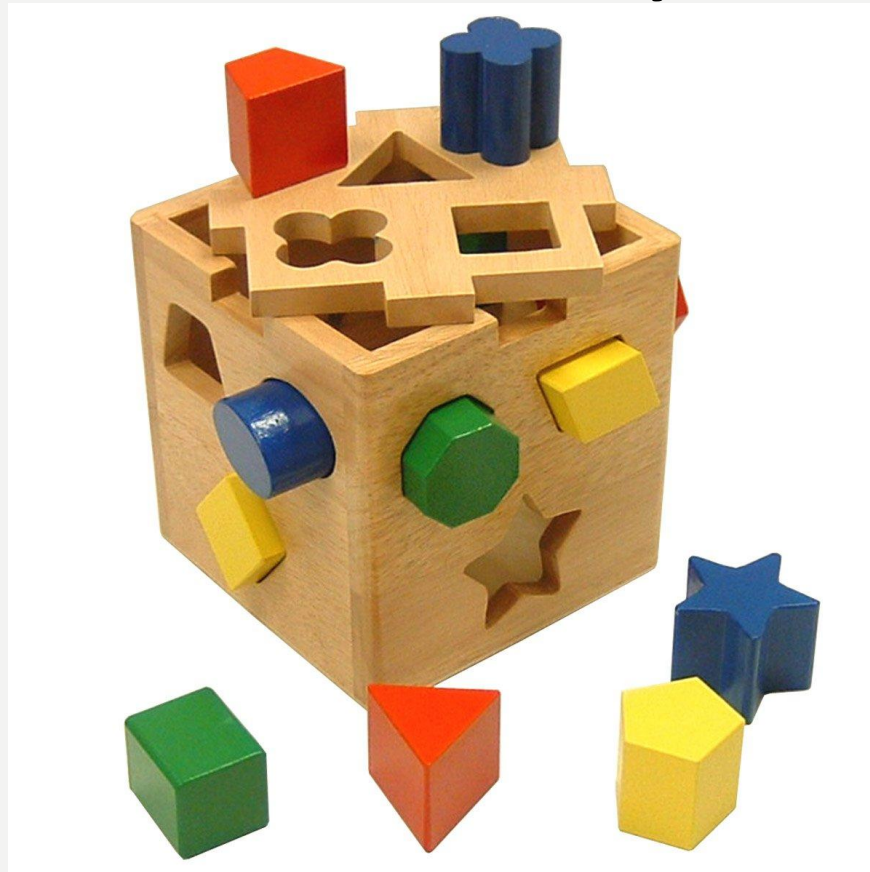
# The “STEALTH” application



# **Demonstrated Interest**

- **Possible ways to express interest**
  - **visiting campus**
  - **attending presentation, virtual tour, webinar, etc.**
  - **college fairs**
  - **request information (mailing lists)**
  - **interview**
  - **why questions on application**
- **Student interest—not parent**

# What is a good match university?





# Size **OF THE UNIVERSITY**



Cornell 22,000

Dartmouth 6,300



# Undergraduate Vs Graduate Populations

- Princeton has 3 times more undergraduate students compared to graduate students.
- Harvard has 3 times more graduate students compared to undergraduate students.
- Penn has 50/50
- Students tend to get more contact with the professors if there are less graduate students



# Location



Princeton U. in  
Princeton town  
Population 28,572



Columbia U. in New York  
Population 8.4 million

# Pre-professional or not

- Penn's Wharton School of Business
- Columbia's Fu Foundation School of Engineering
- Cornell's School of Hotel Administration
- Princeton has no pre-professional programs and Cornell has the most.

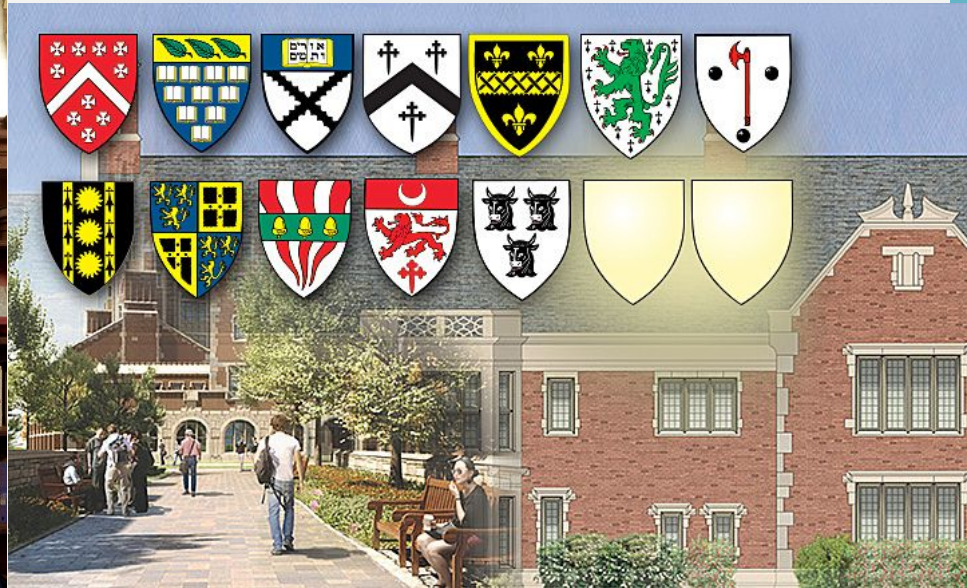


COLUMBIA | ENGINEERING  
The Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science



# Residential colleges or not?

Harvard, Yale, Penn, and Princeton have house systems where students live and learn with their professors similar to Oxford and Cambridge.



# Teaching and Learning Columbia

- “There are some books everyone needs to read to be educated” (no other Ivy agrees). Columbia has no general education requirements. Instead, all students must take the Common Columbia Core classes that are small, discussion-based seminars. This creates a rich and broad base of knowledge that all students share. It somehow creates a Columbia identity.
- [Literature Humanities](#)
- [Contemporary Civilization](#)
- [University Writing](#)
- [Art Humanities](#)
- [Music Humanities](#)
- [Frontiers of Science](#)
- @50% of students are science and engineering majors.

# Teaching and Learning - Brown

- “Choose Your Own Adventure” curriculum
- Unlike other American universities, **Brown** has no required core **curriculum** or **distribution requirements** that students must complete in order to graduate. Students have the freedom to shape their own education and to make their college curricula addressing their own interests and aspirations.

# Teaching and Learning - Penn

- Believe in doing instead of saying (practical application of knowledge), so academics are tied to practical work like internships, community service and projects.
- The focus is on solving complex, real-world problems and a commitment to working across disciplinary boundaries to find solutions.
- Due to Penn's interdisciplinary approach with very flexible curriculum, it is very common that students take double majors and minors.

# Teaching and Learning - Princeton

- A compulsory senior research thesis/project makes Princeton unique.
- Students declare major end of 2<sup>nd</sup> year and they write 2 junior papers to learn more about their area and to prepare them/lead them into their senior thesis.
- Liberal arts - the freshman writing seminar is the only required class.
- Students need to be interested in independent research and they have to be academically curious.
- Students can **not** do double majors



# Common App Essay Prompts

- 1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
- 2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
- 3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
- 4. Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma - anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.
- 5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
- 6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
- 7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

# Essays



- This is the one part of the application that the student has FULL control over
- Students tell the university Who They Are!
- Ideas for topics/essays should begin to form in Grade 11
- Authentic – must be your voice

# Supplements

Along with the basic Common Application essay, the Ivy League/high selective schools require supplemental essay responses to gain a deeper understanding of the student as an applicant. You should explain how the school is a good match for you and how you can enhance the university community. What is important to you? How do they fit into your goals for the future?

# Summer Experiences/Learning/Touring



- Learning should continue past June
- Students get a feel for what competitive universities are like
- Can justify in your application your strong interest based on first-hand experience
- Tours are helpful ways of getting a feel for the campus
- Information available on university website

The Harvard Summer School logo, which includes the Harvard crest (a shield with three open books) and the text "HARVARD SUMMER SCHOOL" in a serif font.

HARVARD  
SUMMER SCHOOL

# OXBRIDGE (OXFORD/CAMBRIDGE)

- Be aware of early deadlines (October 15)
- Must do preparation for external exam (LNAT, TSA, BMAT, etc.)
- Personal Statement is 80% academic and 20% all else related to course of study
- External research is important

# OXBRIDGE

- Minimum Abitur predicted score 1.0 to 1.2/or 3-5 APs for application to be considered
- External Exam results and predicted grades will determine if an interview is given
- A successful interview determines offer

# UK MEDICINE

- Few spots available for International Students (7.5 % of places relegated to International Students)
- Check requirements on BMAT or UCAT (Summer test preparation required)
- Fee increases for International students



# UK MEDICINE

- Credentials from UK may not be transferable to other other countries
- Very difficult for non-UK passport holders to obtain employment post graduation
- There are excellent medical schools/colleges in the region where credentials/certification align
- MUST have a medical (3 weeks minimum) related internship before applying

Questions?

