



INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF FLORENCE

COLLEGE AND CAREER COUNSELING HANDBOOK



MISSION

A laboratory for learning where we collaborate to add meaning to a shared future.

VISION

We aspire to build communities of creative makers and doers.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	4
Career Program	6
Career & College Curriculum	8
Application Checklist	13

Adapted from The ISCA International Model for School Counseling Programs, 2nd. ed & ASCA
National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs, 4th ed.

INTRODUCTION

CAREER COUNSELING PROGRAM

The Counseling department at ISF provides professional academic advice enabling students to succeed in high school, plan for their university and move forward into their future. Through our College and Career program, ISF students are guided, counseled and encouraged throughout the process with the goal of having each student develop a post high school plan.

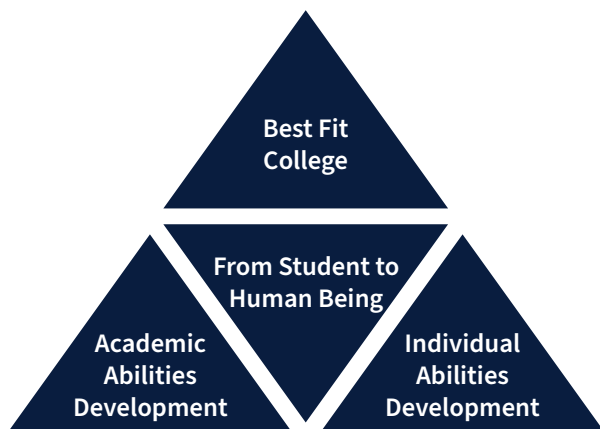
CAREER DEVELOPMENT

“What am I going to do after graduation?” Do not worry if you do not know the answer to this question yet. However, it is a question that is worth thoughtfully considering, because as you progress through high school, you are faced with numerous decisions, such as DP options and university choices. Therefore, it is a good idea to begin exploring your future career options early on in your education so that you can make informed decisions along the way.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Life is a series of decisions. No matter what decisions you make, whether ‘what to have for lunch?’ or ‘what extracurricular activities should I maintain?’ or ‘where should I live after university?’, we’ve found the same steps in the career development process can be used to help with our decision making in all areas of life.

The world is continually changing and so are you. Some jobs that are highly sought after today did not exist five years ago and as you work through the process of career development, your plans may change along the way. That is why career development is a lifelong process. Be open-minded to new ideas, embrace change and you will find that as you follow the process you will make effective career decisions.



The focus is to help students understand:

- the connection between school and the world of work
- plan for, and make a successful transition from high school to post secondary education, career training or the workforce





CAREER PROGRAM

Standard A: Students will research and anticipate potential career paths connected to abilities and personal interests.

COMPETENCY A1: SELF EXPLORATION

- C:A1:1** Draw connections between personal abilities, skills and interests and potential career options
- C:A1:2** Draw connections between enrichment and extracurricular activities and potential career paths
- C:A1:3** Consider how various career paths may align or conflict with personal values
- C:A1:4** Apply academic and employment readiness skills in work-based learning situations such as internships, shadowing, and/or mentoring experiences
- C:A1:5** Demonstrate respect of individual cultural uniqueness and cultural understanding in the workplace
- C:A1:6** Identify strategies to maintain work-life balance

COMPETENCY A2: CAREER RESEARCH

- C:A2:1** Identify career trends and occupations
- C:A2:2** Identify and define the skills that are predicted to be essential for the future workforce
- C:A2:3** Locate, evaluate, and interpret career information
- C:A2:4** Identify the necessary education and training needed to achieve potential career goals
- C:A2:5** Understand how stereotypes and other biases may impact career accessibility, and actively challenge these barriers on behalf of self and others
- C:A2:6** Explain the rights and responsibilities of employers and employees
- C:A2:7** Explain the importance of responsibility, dependability, integrity, and effort in the workplace





CAREER AND COLLEGE CURRICULUM

Standard B: Students will plan for future career aspirations and goals.

COMPETENCY B1: POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION AND CAREER PLANNING

- C:B1:1** Use a variety of resources and tools to research and enhance career planning and assessment tools
- C:B1:2** Apply decision making skills to course selection, post-secondary education and career planning
- C:B1:3** Develop a personal draft of a post-secondary education plan and career path
- C:B1:4** Assess and modify educational plan to support career goals
- C:B1:5** Describe the career planning process
- C:B1:6** Create a resume
- C:B1:7** Maintain a digital career planning portfolio

SELF-AWARENESS AND DEVELOPMENT (GRADE 9)

The first step in career development is to know yourself. Understanding the real you will help prepare you to make decisions that best suit your own interests, skills, needs and circumstances. What you know about yourself now, is not the end destination but rather the self-awareness that serves as your foundation to keep developing and making choices that are in your best interests. When thinking about career choice, you should reflect upon your:

- Interests – what do you like to do?
- Skills – what do you believe you are good at doing?
- Work-related values – what is most important to you?
- Personality – how do you tend to think, feel and behave?

No one else has a combination and interaction of these attributes exactly like you and they should reflect your own unique character. It is what makes you unique.

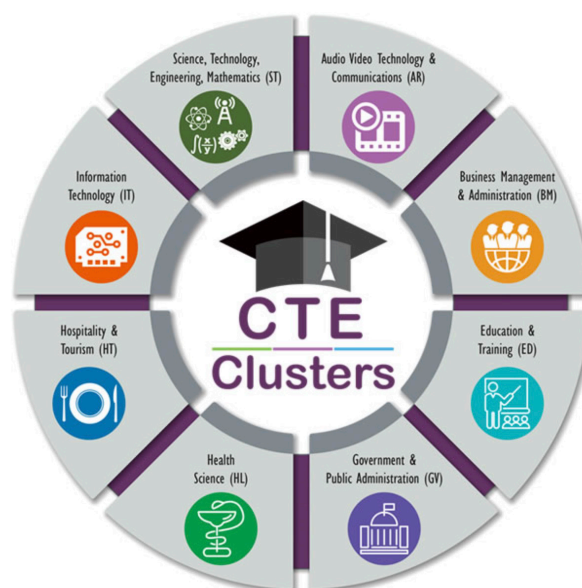
- **Exploring interests:** High school is the time for one to explore and gradually find your real passions, so you really need to use your Grade 9 to actively find your interests for the years to come.
- **ECA:** Participating actively in extracurricular activities in school and keeping doing them until the end of Grade 12 would demonstrate commitment during the application process. It is also encouraged for you to try out different things until you find your true interests. If ISF does not offer activities that you like, you can set up a new club on your own.
- **Meeting with college counselors:** During your high school years, it is important for you to have good communication with your college counselor. We can guide you on how to select courses, how to make the most of the school resources, and how to maximize the benefit that ISF can bring to you. Most universities

require counselors to write recommendation letters on your behalf. Therefore, it is important to respond to all requests for information, schedule individual meetings and attend all relevant group meetings.

- **Creating a main resume:** Compile a list of all of your activities, CAS projects, achievements, honors, and awards, and add new ones immediately onto the list right after you complete them. That will make it much easier for you to create your resume, to prepare your application materials, and use it for summer program applications or internship opportunities.
- **Developing good reading habits:** The importance of reading cannot be over-emphasized. Find interesting books to read in order to develop good reading habits, and while you are improving your reading speed, comprehension abilities, and vocabulary, you will expand your knowledge.
- **Keeping good learning habits and selecting courses cautiously:** The IBDP is a very challenging curriculum so you should develop good learning and study habits. Choose courses in your areas of academic interest. A course load should be rigorous, but not so challenging that it threatens your ability to balance all parts of your life. Manage your time using calendar apps and develop a system for organization.

CAREER EXPLORATION (GRADE 10)

It is good to explore what exists in the world of work and consider what career pathways may suit you. Although you are not expected to immediately know what occupation you want in the future, it is a good idea to begin exploring any areas that appeal to you.



Department of Defense Education Activity (Source: <https://www.dodea.edu/curriculum/careerteched/clusters.cfm>)

The world of work is vast and complicated, not to mention the complex interactions and intersections of activities, occupations and industries. If this feels overwhelming or you don't know where to start, we recommend starting with career clusters and pathways. There are a number of websites that can help you.

- **Enhancing ECA Involvement:** You can showcase your growth and improvement through extracurricular activities. If you joined a club, consider becoming more involved by obtaining a leadership position. Transitioning from passive to active participation will help you create impact and expand your skill sets.
- **Reading through college information:** Although you do not need to do formal school research, it is still beneficial for you to start considering your options. You can go to college fairs and use your breaks to visit different campuses. Learn about colleges in different countries in order to understand the differences in programs and application processes.
- **Making plans for taking standardized tests:** Since COVID-19 has resulted in many colleges changing their standardized test policy, it is recommended that you check university admissions web pages. First determine which tests are recommended for the colleges and programs to which you plan to apply. Develop a calendar for taking standardized tests, paying careful attention to enrollment dates. Many test centers have limited spots that fill up quickly. Standardized tests include but are not limited to language tests (TOEFL, IELTS, Duolingo) aptitude and achievement (SAT, ACT) and entrance exams (Bocconi test, Cambridge Assessment) which vary between countries. Some countries require college entrance exam results such as SAT or ACT for US schools, and MAT or STEP for British schools.
- **IB Curriculum Planning:** IB curriculum is one of the most challenging curriculums globally. You need to have a conversation about course selection with your parents, IB Coordinator, and College Counselor to make sure that the difficulty of courses you choose are appropriate.
- **Making the most of your summer:** The summer vacation time, after grade 10, can include activities such as participating in summer school programs offered by colleges, finding volunteer programs in your areas of interest, challenging yourself in academic competitions, scientific projects, or occupying yourself with community service. Participation in these activities should be more about expanding knowledge and experience and not about simply enhancing your applications.



COLLEGE SEARCH (GRADE 11)

Choosing the right college? Is there really a college for everyone? How does one start and complete the task of applying to, and selecting, a college? As we look to find answers to these and countless other college-related questions, our College Counseling team will be available to grade 9-12 students and their parents to guide them through this exciting educational milestone.

While embarking on the college selection process, we strongly believe that students should carry the responsibility for as much of the process as possible because it is the student who is the candidate. Keeping good academic records, engaging the school activities, exploring subject interests, collecting information, requesting recommendations, and organizing components of the application are all good learning experiences for college-bound students.

- **Studying IB courses with your best effort and communicate with your subject teachers sufficiently:** Grade 11 is the first year of your IB curriculum study, an important determinant for your future IB predicted score. Study as hard as you can and treat it seriously. Grade 11 teachers are probably your future recommenders, so you need to make sure that they know you well by actively getting involved in classroom discussions. Engage in conversations with them, never missing any opportunity to learn and consult them regarding their knowledge and experience.
- **Participating in standardized tests:** This is the year most standardized tests required for admission are administered. Be sure to plan far in advance and sign up early in the registration process.
- **Planning for a school visit:** Try to use spring break or summer vacation to visit college campuses and let yourself have a more concrete impression about colleges of your interest. You can attend information seminars during the visits, introduce yourself to the admissions officers, and ask some meaningful questions to showcase your interests in the school.
- **Settling down with your initial draft of your school list:** Investigate schools, and try to find colleges from different countries, and compare them with your qualifications. Be sure to have a balanced school list with safe, match, and reach schools.
- **Registering for an application account:** Once you have your initial list of potential universities, you can begin the application process. Determine if you apply through a platform or directly through the college portal. Register for an online application account, fill out your personal information and requested academic information. Investigate each application to determine individual requirements, including personal statements, essays, supplemental essays, etc. During your research, jot down what interests you the most about each university

and their program. It will help in the application and decision processes.

- **Plan the theme of your personal statement:** The personal statement is one of the most crucial components of your application portfolio. It allows you to show who you are to the admissions officers, why you're interested in your chosen field and how you're prepared to study at the university level. Try to think about a theme as early as possible and begin writing your first draft, leaving plenty of time for revisions and proofreading. Note that the expected content of your personal statement can vary from country to country. Be sure to attend meetings and workshops for information and helpful hints.

COLLEGE SEARCH

The first and most important task to complete when starting your college search is to decide what is important to you in a school. Search for a school that fits you well academically, socially, and culturally. Don't eliminate a school solely because it's outside of your comfort zone. The challenge of dealing with the unfamiliar can help you grow as a person.

HOW TO CHOOSE A COLLEGE

Students primarily choose colleges based on their major of choice and whether or not they fit the admission criteria. Other factors include level of prestige, cost, location, size, and extracurricular activities. It is important for students to set realistic goals for themselves and apply to schools that are within their reach and a little above their reach. Students should sort and classify the schools they apply to in order to ensure they are setting realistic, possible college goals. Read the criteria below to determine if you are choosing colleges that are within a reasonable set of expectations.

MATCH: A match school is one where your academic credentials (IG and IB grades, SAT or ACT scores, TOEFL or IELTS scores and class rank) fall well within (or even exceed) the school's range for the average freshman. There are no guarantees, but it's not unreasonable to be accepted to several of your match schools.

REACH: A reach school is one where your academic credentials fall below the school's range for the average freshman. Reach schools are long-shots, but they should still be possible (and not a dream.)

SAFETY: A safety school is one where your academic credentials fall above the school's range for the average freshman. You should be reasonably certain that you will be admitted to your safety schools. Like the rest of your list, these should also be colleges you would be happy to attend. In addition to an admissions safety school, it is a good idea to include a financial safety school on your list, one that you and your family can afford even if you receive no aid at all.

APPLICATION PROCESS - GRADE 12

Most students begin work on college applications in the summer before or fall of their senior year. College application deadlines vary, so be sure to take note of each one. A college application always includes an application form. These may be through an application platform such as Common App or UCAS, or directly through the college website. Most colleges require additional items, such as a high school transcript, personal statement, essays, letters of recommendation, entrance exam scores and in some cases interviews.

US colleges offer students the opportunity to apply early. This means that they can apply before the usual deadline and get a decision early. This may increase a student's chances of acceptance because it shows that they're very interested in the college. However, make sure you understand the rules of applying early. For example, under some plans a student can only apply to one college early, and if accepted and offered enough financial aid, they must go to that college.

UK universities limit the number of programs a student can apply to. Most application deadlines are in October, January and March. Conditional offers are granted to students with a clear set of requirements and grades/scores that must be obtained before an acceptance is finalized.

There are many universities throughout the EU and world. We encourage students to apply broadly, carefully noting each college's application criteria. There are programs for all students, at all levels, with diverse interests.

- **Starting your college application as soon as possible:** All four years of your high school are for this moment! The college application starts from the summer of Grade 11 to Grade 12, so be sure to leave yourself enough time to complete it. Be cognizant of your time management and plan ahead so you don't create undue pressure and anxiety for yourself. You need to complete your online application registration, recommendation letter requests, resume, and begin your personal statement during the summer entering Grade 12.
- **Keeping good IB scores:** The scores you will get for your Grade 12 are still very important for your college admission. Universities often request mid-year reports, which include your first trimester grades. Once grade 12 trimester 1 grades are posted they will also be used to recalculate your predicted grades. Any requests for predicted grades after trimester 1, will receive the most current calculation.
- **Complete the preparations and submissions of your early and regular application on time:** The college application deadline for some countries are as early as October or November, so you must complete all required documents before then. While for other universities, their deadlines vary from November through summer after graduation. For universities and programs that

require the submission of an art portfolio, you should note the deadlines for the submission may be different than application due dates.

- **Following up with your applications:** Do check your application account to ensure that college has received all the information and materials they need, including your standardized test results, high school transcript, and recommendation letters, etc. If there is anything missing, you must get it fixed ASAP. Check your inbox regularly and never miss any emails that are sent to you.
- **Offer Choice:** Receiving offers from many colleges, and do not know which one to choose? Try a school visit. If you are waitlisted by your dream school, you can send a letter of continued interest to their admissions office. Whatever university you decide to go to, you should make sure that you really like the school and it fits you well. Congratulations! Enjoy your four years of college time!

US EARLY DECISION (ED)

A process whereby a student can submit an application by a designated date (typically on November 1st) and receive a decision early that carries a binding commitment to enroll, if accepted, to the college. The student and parent must sign a statement of intent that, if admitted, the student will attend that college/university.

US EARLY ACTION (EA)

A process whereby a student can submit an application by a designated date (typically on November 1st) and receive an early response. The EA student, if accepted, is not bound to enroll. They can also apply to other colleges early action or early decision as well.

US RESTRICTIVE EARLY ACTION (REA)

A process more restrictive than early action but less committal than early decision. Students can apply only to their single-choice EA institution in the early round, with exceptions. Students can't apply to any ED school, but can apply to other EA schools. Some schools refer to this process as "single-choice early action" which is also a nonbinding process for students to apply to their top institution. Students cannot apply to other schools EA or ED.

US REGULAR DECISION (RD)

Principal application deadline for the majority of schools and institutions. Although you may send in your applications earlier, colleges do not accept late applications.



COMMENCEMENT
CEREMONY

Saturday, May 27, 2023



UNIVERSITIES ACCEPTANCES AND OFFERS



UNITED STATES

Adelphi University*
American University, DC
Binghamton University, SUNY*
Boston University*
Butler University*
Colorado College*
Colorado School of Mines*
Dartmouth University
Drew University*
Duke University*
Emerson College*
Florida Gulf Coast State University*
Fordham University*
Georgia Institute of Technology*
Hofstra University*
Ithaca College
James Madison University*
John Cabot University (Rome)*
Loyola Marymount University*
Marist College*
Marymount Manhattan College*
New York University*
North Carolina at Chapel Hill*
Northeastern University
NYU Abu Dhabi*
Oklahoma State University*
Old Dominion University*
Pace University*
Penn State University*
Princeton University
Rohde Island School of Design
Rutgers University*
Santa Clara University*
Sarah Lawrence College*
Seattle Pacific University
Southern Methodist University*
Stanford University*
St. John's University*
St. John's University Honors Program*
Stonehill College*
Suffolk University, Boston*
The American Musical and Dramatic Academy
The New School, NYC*
Temple University*
University of California Berkeley*
University of California Davis*
University of California Los Angeles*
University of California San Diego*
University of Colorado Denver*
University of Delaware
University of Massachusetts at Amherst*
University of Maryland*
University of Maryland, Honors College*
University of Michigan*
University of Oregon*
University of Pennsylvania*
University of San Francisco*
University of Texas, Austin*
University of Texas, San Antonio
University of Utah
University of Washington, Seattle
University of Wisconsin, Superior
USC (University of Southern California)*
Villanova University*
Virginia Commonwealth University*
Virginia Tech*
Wake Forest University
Wellesley College
Western Washington University*
Worcester Polytechnic Institute*
Yale University*

UNITED KINGDOM

Bath Spa University*
Cardiff University
City, University of London*
Courtold Insitutte of Art, University of London*
Durham University*
Glasgow School of Art*
Goldsmith, University of London*
Hartpury University*
HULT International Business School*
Imperial University of London
King's College London, University of London*
Kingston University*
London School of Economics & Political Science*
London Metropolitan University*
Loughborough University*
Middlesex University
Newcastle University
Northeastern University London*
Oxford Brookes University*
Queen Mary University of London*
Royal Holloway, University of London*
SOAS University of London*
Staffordshire University*
UCL (University College London)*
University of Bath*
University of Birmingham*
University of Brighton*
University of Bristol*
University of Cambridge*
University of Central Lancashire
University of Derby*
University of East London*
University of Edinburgh*
University of Exeter*
University of Kent
University of Leeds*
University of London*
University of Manchester*
University of Nottingham*
University of Reading*
University of Southampton*
University of St. Andrews*
University of Sussex*
University of the Arts London (UAL)*
University of Warwick*
University of Westminster, London*
University of York*

ITALY

Accademia Costume e Moda*
Bocconi University*
Istituto Marangoni*
LUISS Business School
Marist College Florence Campus
Polimoda Fashion School
Politecnico*
Sapienza Università di Roma
Università Carlo Cattaneo
Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore*
University of Florence
Università IULM*

NETHERLANDS

Design Academy Eindhoven*
Erasmus University Rotterdam*
Groningen University*
Hotelschool the Hague
Leiden University
Maastricht University*
University of Amsterdam*
Utrecht University*
Zuyd University of the Applied Sciences

SWITZERLAND

EHL Hospitality Business School*
GLION*
Les Roches*

CANADA

McGill University*
University of British Columbia
University of Toronto*

SPAIN

IE University*

EUROPE

ESCP Business School*

BRASIL

Fundação Getúlio Vargas

FRANCE

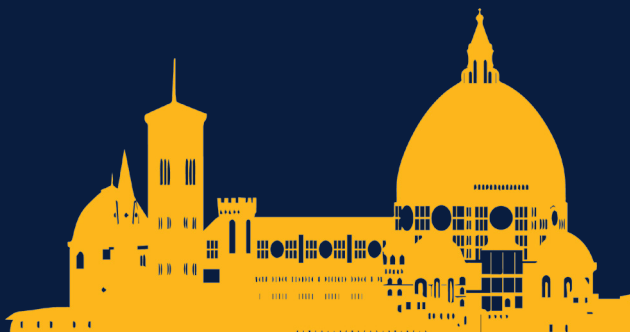
Parsons Paris, The New School
Ecole Polytechnique de Paris

CZECH REPUBLIC

University of Veterinary and Pharmaceutical Science Brno

JAPAN

Temple University, Japan Campus



ROLLING ADMISSIONS (RL)

Evaluate applications as they are received versus waiting to evaluate all applications after a hard deadline. Schools will continue to evaluate applications until they've filled all the slots for their incoming class. Applicants can be notified as early as two weeks after the application is complete and submitted.

UNIFROG

A platform that helps students with the university application process - exploring their interests, CV/resume building, finding education and training opportunities, and drafting their applications.

COMMON APP

An undergraduate college admission application that applicants may use to apply to over 1,000 member colleges and universities in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia, as well as in Canada, China, Japan, and many European countries.

UC APPLICATION

A separate application system for admissions and scholarships for UC campuses. While each campus is unique, students submit one application to the UC system as a whole, indicating which specific campus(es) he or she is applying to. Applications for the fall term are due on November 30.

STANDARDIZED TESTING

Measures the education level of students and schools on a broad scale. Examples include TOEFL, IELTS, MAP, SAT or ACT in order to present one or both sets of scores for admission.

SCHOOL OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

Transcript: An official record of education. It is a detailed record of all the subjects you have studied with your scores in the form of grades given by the institution of study.

Predicted Grades Report: Grade reports from an IB curriculum that forecast final grades. Predicted grades are provided in the beginning of the senior year, but may change as the student moves through the second year of the IB program.

Teacher recommendation: Letters from teachers that help the admission committee learn information about you that test scores and grades do not reflect. Students should give careful thought to which teachers they would like to write their teacher recommendation as they provide insight and perspective about your classroom learning style and experience.

Ask two teachers for a recommendation. You should select teachers from two different disciplines, one preferably from a subject related to your intended major (i.e., one from English,

world languages or history, and one from math or science). Letters of recommendation can be requested late in grade 11 or early in grade 12.

Teachers are asked by numerous students for recommendations and many limit the number of recommendations they agree to write. By doing so, they do not over commit themselves. They want to give your recommendation the same effort and consideration as others.

COLLEGE ESSAY/PERSONAL STATEMENT

College Essay: Most college applications require at least one main essay that deals with a particular subject, and many also include additional shorter questions (supplemental essays) as well. The purpose of this is twofold: colleges want to assess your writing skills, but they also want to learn more about you.

Personal Statement: A form of essay that relays autobiographical information about its author. Depending on the country and/or university, the focus of the essay may be on the individual student or their interest and preparation for their intended area of study.

- Be as honest and introspective as possible. Take this opportunity to tell the admissions counselor things about yourself that cannot be learned from any other part of the application you submit. If there are any inconsistencies in your academic, athletic or creative record, you can use this space to explain them.
- Application essay topics. Try to discover what makes you unique. They also show what you care about and the kind of person you are.
- Creating a theme for your essay such as risk taking, intellectual independence, or love of the outdoors often brings up interesting examples of your life to support your chosen theme. Specific incidents to illustrate general observations are considered essential.

Practical Considerations:

- Write more than one draft, edit, and revise—this process takes time and you should not expect to finish it in one sitting.
- Do not try to be too unique or too creative. Make sure to use your own voice!
- Check for misspellings and have it proofread by actual human beings (do not rely on spell check).

Potential Topics:

- Avoid overused, trendy, or hot topics, such as politics, privilege, sex, and religion.
- Write about what you know. Be yourself!

- Keep the topic simple—choose one idea or situation
- Your choice of topic does not matter nearly as much as your approach.
- Make sure it reflects who you are and what you know.
- Write about what you have learned, what you have observed, and how you have changed.
- Highlight an accomplishment.

Other Words of Advice:

- Focus small, think big. Don't try to tackle too much in the essay. Stick to one experience, event, or activity. You'll be surprised at how much you can reveal.
- Have fun! Sit down and start writing; your opening sentence doesn't have to be perfect yet (that's why we call it a rough draft).
- Have a good opening line that will capture the reader's attention.
- Ask for advice from the people who know you the best, but write it yourself.
- You are different from anyone else. Make admission counselors see that!
- Humor can help, but don't force it.
- Show, don't tell (i.e., use the senses—smell, touch, taste, hear, see). Add details, details, details.
- Enliven your language with descriptive verbs.

THE COLLEGE INTERVIEW

Many schools use interviews as part of the application process. Rarely are interviews required for admission, but oftentimes they are recommended. The interview is a terrific opportunity for an admission office to get to know you better, and it is also a great chance for you to get to know the school better, too.

RESUME/CV

Resumes are not a required part of the college admission process, but the information such as skills, honors, awards, accomplishments, and activities listed in a resume are frequently comparable to what you should list on a college application and or talk about during a college interview.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- **Create a list of colleges**
- **Identify admission requirements and deadline**
- **Create application ID/platform account**
- **Personal statement, Essay, Resume/ CV, portfolio if required**
- **Request recommendation letters**
- **Request transcript formatting**
- **Admission test scores or standardized tests**
- **Complete college application**
- **Submit application**
- **Inform school counselor that you applied**
- **Request high school transcript sent**
- **Request midyear grade report sent**
- **Application portal checking/Confirm receipt of application materials**
- **Send additional material, if needed (financial statement)**
- **Receive notification from office of admission**
- **Meet deadline to accept admission and send deposit**



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