SSIS
SUZHOU'S INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

UNIVERSITY HANDBOOK

University Handbook

Introduction

College counsellors assist students and families in identifying and applying to post-secondary institutions (PSIs). For some students, the location or the majors are important; however, for others, cost may be of significant concern. We will help families identify options where students' wellbeing and academics are highlighted to maximize a smooth transition from high school to further tertiary education or other post-secondary options. Each student is provided with guidance in the area of personality, interests and career awareness, pre-college admission testing, and academic counselling.

At SSIS, students, parents and counsellors use *Maia Learning,* an invaluable and comprehensive online platform where users have access to key information (e.g. admission requirements, dates and deadlines, financial aid, etc.) on a diverse range of PSIs and careers worldwide. Students complete a number of activities and assessments to identify their interests, learning styles, and strengths. They can reflect on their personal and academic tenacity, strengthen their organisation and time management skills, and explore future possibilities of interest throughout their high school years. Further, this is where students will actively research and compile their list of PSIs for their college counsellors to review. All of this maximises students' admission chances to schools that are a "good" fit for them. Once a student's applications list is finalised, the college counsellors will use *Maia Learning* to manage student applications and supporting documents.

Deciding what to do after graduating from SSIS is a decision that requires discussion, investigation, and reflection. The College Counselling team is here to assist with advice and to answer questions, as they are committed to making this a positive experience for all. Our team also includes a records officer who assists with generating academic transcripts, certificates of enrolment and graduation, and any other required documentation. Current members of the team are:

Pearl Noh (pearlnoh@mail.ssis-suzhou.net) Korean students (most)
Elizabeth Watson (elizabethwatson@mail.ssis-suzhou.net) Family names M–Z
Emily Williams (emilywilliams@mail.ssis-suzhou.net) Family names A–L
Sunny Zhu (sunnyzhu@mail.ssis-suzhou.net) Records Officer

The college counselling framework

College counselling at SSIS begins in Grade 9 when the counsellors meet with students four times a year in their wellbeing classes. This increases to six sessions in G10 and then fortnightly classes in Grades 11 and 12.

Grade 9

The curriculum begins towards the end of first semester in Grade 9 and focuses on the MaiaLearning assessments that explore learning styles and personality traits. These assessments help students explore how these aspects can influence their careers and university selection. Students are encouraged to begin thinking about what interests they would like to pursue after completing school and the steps needed to get there.

Grade 10

The college counselling classes in Grade 10 take place primarily in Semester One and have a particular focus on careers and linking university majors with different career paths. Students are encouraged to think about where and what they would like to study and to begin investigating university entry requirements. In Semester Two, we also focus on subject selection for the DP and HSD options and counsellors meet with individual families to discuss future plans and subject suitability.

Grade 11

Fortnightly timetabled classes begin in Grade 11. Building on their identified interests and possible careers and programs of study, students spend a considerable amount of time doing individual and group research into PSIs. The criteria that most commonly influence students when choosing where to study are unpacked in class and students create their own lists of prioritised factors. We analyse application requirements in different countries, look at models for the different components and have time in class to work on application materials (e.g. personal statement, essay, short answer questions, resumes, up to three CAS activity records, etc.) .Students are encouraged to undertake any required standardised tests during Grade 11.

Counsellors will meet with individual families midway through Semester Two to discuss post-secondary plans/options.

College planning calendar for Grade 11:

August	Grade 11 Higher Education Night for students and parents
September–April	Meet with visiting PSI representatives
October	PSAT (at SSIS)
January–August	Continue to research PSIs
March–April	Submit letter of recommendation request form to your college counsellor
April–May	Individual family meetings with your college counsellor to discuss options & progress in G11
May	SAT (at SSIS)
June	SAT subject tests
Summer	Take any required English-proficiency tests
	Take the UCAT or BMAT (if applicable)

Visit PSIs of interest
Work on written responses to support your applications
Undertake possible internships or summer programs
Revise resume
Compile a list of universities to which you are considering applying

Grade 12

Fortnightly timetabled classes continue in G12. Students are expected to have finalised their choices to a maximum of eight institutions by early Semester One; the focus is then on submitting applications and ensuring all documents are correct and all deadlines are met. Students are responsible for checking deadlines and following up on the submission of supporting documents. It is important that students are mindful of school holidays and counsellor workload and not request applications to be sent at the last minute. Students also need to ensure that any standardised test results are sent directly to the universities to which they are applying.

Once offers are received, students must make a decision to accept only one admission offer, and confirm whether a final official school transcript and/or final IB results from SSIS are required for submission These will be sent once the grades are finalised.

Universities/colleges always predicate acceptance upon satisfactory completion of Grade 12. Students are urged to consult with their college counsellor about any substantial changes in their Grade 12 courses or grades. If a student's academic situation changes at any time during Grade 12, PSIs will be notified. Self-disclosure by the student of any academic inconsistencies is the preferred way for PSIs to learn of these changes.

Further, many university/college applications now ask the student and/or college counsellor whether the applicant has ever been suspended or taken a leave of absence from school.

College planning calendar for Grade 12:

August	Attend Grade 12 Higher Education Night for students and parents
September–October	Individual family meetings with your college counsellor to discuss options and review application materials. Final list of PSIs due (max 8)
September	Oxford/Cambridge/UK medicine, veterinary and dental applications due
September – November	Meet with visiting PSI representatives
October	Complete ED/EA applications
November	Submit University of California, California State University, and HK applications
December	Apply for financial aid (where applicable)
January–August	Complete British, Canadian, Singaporean, Japanese, Australian, European, Korean and other applications worldwide. Check individual deadlines. Notify college counsellors of application outcomes and keep MaiaLearning updated
March – May	Meet with visiting Korean PSI representatives
May	IB and final school exams; graduation
July	Final IB results released

Components of a student's candidacy

Helpful	Helpful, but not necessary	Harmful … Don't do it!
Strength of HS academic program	Athletics/Arts service/Leadership	Unsolicited contact from parents/family members
Standardized testing	Objective extracurricular experience	Too many ungrounded recommendations
Counsellor recommendation	Contributions to school culture	Overly aggressive school lobbying
Teacher recommendation	Child of alumnus/a	
Additional information (if requested)	Diversity	
	Financial need	

Post-secondary institution search criteria

There are many things to consider when students are looking for their "best fit" PSI. Here is a set of criteria to keep in mind throughout the process:

- **Program(s) of study**
  - o Does the PSI offer what you want to study?
  - o Degree structure – very clearly delineated paths to degrees? Opportunity to make your own choices? Core curriculum?
  - o If undecided, how difficult is it to change majors/programs?
  - o Access to and availability of internships/co-op placements
  - o Opportunities for study abroad
  - o Rigor of academic program
  - o Grading system

- **Location**
  - o Geography (e.g. work opportunities; terrain; climate; urban; rural; health)
  - o Campus style and architecture
  - o Distance/Accessibility
    - ▪ How far away from home is it?
    - ▪ Are there family and/or friends nearby?
  - o Safety – On and off campus
  - o Transportation – Public, transit options, proximity of airport

- **Institutional characteristics**
  - o **Student population – Social? Studious? Size?**
    - ▪ How many undergraduates?
    - ▪ Student/faculty ratio?
    - ▪ Undergraduate retention?
  - o **Cost/Affordability**
    - ▪ Comprehensive costs
    - ▪ Tuition, housing, travel, activities, technology, medical/health insurance fees – other fees?
  - o **Financial aid/Bursaries/Scholarships**
    - ▪ Need-based? Merit-based?
    - ▪ How/when do you apply?
  - o **Teaching and assessment format(s)**
    - ▪ Lecture, discussion, project, research, performance-based?
    - ▪ Who is teaching and assessing? Professors or teaching assistants?
  - o **Student culture**
    - ▪ Do the professors know who you are or are you one of many?
    - ▪ Are there faculty and/or student mentors?
    - ▪ What kind of academic and social advising are available?
    - ▪ Freshman/international student orientation – what does that look like?

- o **Community Style**
  - Diversity
  - Disciplinary system
  - Inclusiveness and tolerance
  - Fraternity/Sorority presence
  - Social and political activism
  - Student government
  - Options for social life and activities both on and off campus
  - Visitors and events (e.g. speakers; presenters; films; theatre; music; etc.)

- o **Residence accommodation**
  - Co-ed? Single-sex?
  - Visitation/residence rules?
  - Pets allowed?
  - Communal or private showers?
  - Ensuite bathroom shared with how many roommates?
  - Furnishings?

- o **Places to Eat**
  - Cafeterias, restaurants/eateries on and around campus
  - Dietary needs

- o **Facilities**
  - Classrooms
  - Research labs and equipment
  - Support centers: student services; health and wellbeing; academic
  - Career advising and assistance with internship or job placement
  - Libraries
    - Times of operation
    - Resources
    - Study space

- o **Athletics and exercise**
  - Intramurals and club sports
  - Gym memberships and classes
  - Competitive sports' teams

- o **Miscellaneous**
  - Shopping (e.g. clothes, household items, etc.)
  - Grocery stores, supermarkets
  - Banks; post offices

Rankings – Points to consider when referring to university/college ranking websites:

- Institutions of higher education have no commonly agreed upon measures to allow for the comparison of teaching and research programs.
- The overwhelming variety in size and purpose of institutions makes the prospect of comparing universities/colleges a daunting one for students, parents, and for the institutions themselves.
- Selectivity, peer reputation, and financial resources are often the sole indicators of quality. These measures have little to do with teaching and learning, and may reflect little more than popularity.

In other words, rankings should not drive the PSI selection process because they fail to provide a complete picture of what transpires on the campus of a specific institution. The information contained in rankings may be used to inform your post-secondary search, yet the validity of rankings is debatable as there are many different measurements that rank universities and colleges using a range of subjective variables.

Post-secondary institution search

College Counselling Office: We have a number of resource texts and materials in the College Counselling Office and Secondary School Library that students may borrow. Students are also encouraged to correspond directly with the schools/programs (e.g. email; speak to university representatives, etc.) that interest them. Most resources these days are online rather than printed; we have included some suggested websites in Appendix A at the end of this handbook.

Post-secondary representatives: SSIS hosts many university/college representatives throughout the year. Interested high school students and parents are encouraged to attend these informational meetings and question and answer sessions. A list of visiting PSIs visiting at and around SSIS are located on: *Maia Learning,* the SSIS online calendar under "Post-Secondary Institution Visits,", SSIS student news, and on the bulletin boards outside the college counselling offices. Visits are usually scheduled during lunch or after school; however, occasionally they will be held during class. *Note: In S1 2020–21 there will not be any campus visits. All PSI sessions will be virtual. Some will be coordinated by SSIS while others will be global or regional sessions organised by the PSIs.*

Post-secondary visits: Although it is not always possible, one of the best ways to find out if a school is right for the student is to visit the campus. Students are encouraged to visit as many universities/colleges as possible by contacting each school in advance about the visit (usually during the school holidays or summer). Many campuses have "preview days" or "open days" – pre-arranged times for prospective students. Emailing SSIS alumni at the various colleges may also be helpful. *Note: In 2020–21 many PSIs are unable to run in-person tours; virtual tours are available on individual university websites and can be found through platforms such as MaiaLearning and the Common App.*

Application limit & document submission policies

Application limit:
We limit the number of PSIs that our students apply to because:
A) If a student has researched universities and is applying carefully, there is no need to apply to any more than eight (8). In fact, we encourage students to apply to fewer than this because if a student has applied to universities that would be reasonable choices (good fits), they should receive multiple offers of admission.
B) The time and money involved. Applying to universities is very time consuming and often stressful. The college counsellors, the staff that write recommendation letters, and the students, all spend an enormous amount of time and energy working on applications. To try to manage more than eight applications at a time is not a wise use of students' time. Applying to many universities can also be quite expensive.
C) When a PSI receives an application, they need to know that it is a serious application that deserves their careful consideration. Universities appreciate the fact that we limit the number of applications and know that SSIS students are serious about their choices.

Note: In 2020–21, students can apply to two additional PSIs, subject to them putting forward a convincing argument to the College Counselling team as to which universities they would be and why it is necessary. The maximum number of applications is 10 if needed. This extenstion will be periodically reviewed as world events evolve.

Accepting offers:
When students are offered admission, the PSI asks for acceptance of the offer and a deposit to indicate the student's intention to attend. This is a serious commitment. Once a student has submitted a deposit and indicated their intent to attend a PSI, SSIS will not submit additional documents (e.g. transcripts, Letters of Recommendation, etc.) in support of further applications to any other institutions.

Why this policy?
A) Once students have submitted a deposit, they are agreeing to attend that PSI, and a seat is reserved for them. If the student does not intend to attend this PSI, they are keeping another student from receiving an offer of admission as the seat is deemed taken.
B) Failure to follow through on a commitment to attend a PSI after submitting a deposit reflects poorly on the student, our school, and future students. Universities and colleges may cease considering SSIS students as viable candidates.

SSIS predicted grade (PG) policy for applications
PGs for post-secondary applications are based largely on the Grade 11, Semester 2 grades. Each teacher takes into account this previous academic performance, historical data on students achieving those grades globally; the relative difficulty of future Grade 12 assessment tasks; and exam reports highlighting areas of particular difficulty. Finally, a student's predicted grades are based on demonstrated ability, not what a student hopes they can achieve.

Letter of recommendation (LOR):
The purpose of obtaining a LOR is to provide PSI with a deeper understanding and awareness of students' strengths, accomplishments, and ability to be successful in their post-secondary studies.

Students should give careful thought to which teachers they would like to write their LOR. They will be asked to fill out a survey citing specific examples of their positive performance and participation in class to serve as a reference which assists teachers in writing LORs.

Students may indicate three teachers that they would like to ask for a recommendation, but college counsellors will make the final selection(s) and ask teachers on students' behalf. The LORs are confidential and will not be shared with students or parents as this will allow LORs to hold more credibility to the students' applications.

Students applying to schools that use online application platforms (e.g. Common Application, UCAS, HK, etc.) will have their teacher recommendations sent electronically to the requested PSIs.

In cases where schools do not accept electronic submissions, the SSIS Records Officer will courier the LORs, along with other required documents via DHL directly from the College Counselling office. Students are responsible for the DHL fees.

At the end of the application process, students should thank all the teachers who wrote recommendations for them.

*** College counsellors, students, and parents will sign an agreement at the beginning of the student's Grade 12 year indicating all parties understand the school's policies and are committed to abide by them.**

The application

There are several components to PSI applications, and they vary from country to country. Admissions requirements can also vary within a PSI, based on a particular area of study. Most applications are submitted electronically, as are supporting documents. The following chart indicates *general* guidelines for documents that may be required to accompany applications within various countries. Students are responsible for knowing the *specifics* as they pertain to each institution to which they are applying.

	Australia/New Zealand	Canada	Europe	HK	Korea	Singapore-	UK	US
Essay								*
Short answer questions		(*)			(*)	*		(*)
Personal statement			(*)	*	*	*	*	
Letter(s) of recommendation			(*)	*	* (*)	(*)	*	*
TOEFL/IELTS	(*)	(*)	(*)	*	*		(*)	(*)
SAT/ACT	(*)	(*)		(*)	(*)	(*)		*
IB predicted grades		*	*	*	* (*)		*	*
IB final marks	*	*	(*)	*	* (*)	*	*	(*)
HS transcripts (G9–12)		*		*	*	*		*
Extra-curricular activities		(*)		*	*			*
CV/resume			(*)	*				(*)

* = Required by most universities   (*) = Required by some, but not all universities

IB Students	HSD Students	IB/HSD Students

Application tips and suggestions:

Following are some practical suggestions to ensure that you have a successful university/college application process:

- Register early for any English proficiency test you think you might need it. Take this test before starting your Grade 12 year.
- Register early for SATs or ACTs and meet the deadlines on the *CollegeBoard* and *ACT* websites.
- Fill out your test applications for SATs and ACTs the same way every time. For example, inserting a middle initial in the second application for a test can confuse the computers and make it difficult to recover your scores.
- Make copies of everything you send to PSIs, financial aid offices, testing services, etc.
- Make appointments for interviews and tours early. A two to three-month lead time is not unusual. Contact your college counsellor for further information.
- Be sure that you would enjoy attending each and every one of the schools on your list.

The college essay

Know yourself, be yourself:

Many US applications require an essay as part of the student's application. Essay questions are written in a manner to elicit personal and genuine responses from students that are largely autobiographical. Students' main task is to write an essay on a topic that cannot be learned from any other part of the application, which will emphasize their strengths and unique qualities. While the choice of topic does not matter nearly as much as your approach, avoid overused or controversial topics.

Be as honest and introspective as possible. If there are any inconsistencies in academics, athletics or creative records, use this space to explain them.

The UCAS personal statement

The UCAS personal statement is very different from the essays required of North American (US, specifically) schools. Students applying to the UK are applying for the specific course (major) within the universities. Therefore, a significant part of the personal statement should be directly related to the course. As well, students should be indicating what study they have already done in the field, any reading done outside of class that pertains to the proposed area of study, and any applicable practical experience. As stated on **www.ucas.com**:
"The personal statement is your opportunity to tell universities and colleges about your suitability for the course(s) that you hope to study. You need to demonstrate your enthusiasm and commitment, and above all, ensure that you stand out from the crowd."

The UK sometimes follows-up the application and personal statement with an interview – in person, online, or telephone. Students should be prepared to answer questions relating to their personal statement should they be invited for an interview. Often, the creative, competitive, or care-related courses have an interview process.

Writing:

A good essay may not determine the decision of your admission, but it can help. There are very few places in the application where your voice is heard directly – this is one of them. Think of all the writing tips you've learned at school and apply them here:
- Consider your audience
- Have a strong "hook" (opening line)
- Avoid slang and jargon
- Be clear and precise
- Use your *own* voice
- Show, don't tell (e.g. describe using the senses – smell, touch, taste, hear, see)
- Grammar and syntax matter
- Check for misspellings and have it proofread (do not rely on spell check).

Standardized testing

Standardized admission testing may impact the admissions process as some PSIs require additional assessment scores as part of the selection process. PSIs may examine these scores in conjunction with the student's cumulative high school grade-point average to help determine admission. Some competitive PSIs may require or highly recommend SAT subject tests in specific subject areas.

The Pre-SAT (PSAT): The Pre-SAT is a standardized test that offers practice for the SAT. It also gives American citizens a chance to qualify for the *National Merit Scholarship Corporation's* scholarship programs. The test measures verbal reasoning, critical reading, mathematical problem-solving, and writing skills. The PSAT is available for students in Grades 10 and 11 and is offered at SSIS for students to write. The PSAT/NMSQT is held in October each year and the PSAT 10 is held in March.

SAT: The College Entrance Examination Board offers the SAT reasoning test as a measurement of the verbal, mathematical, and writing abilities students have acquired through their education. The SAT uses a 1600-point scale: 800 verbal and 800 mathematics. The SAT may be taken as many times as it is offered, although many PSIs recommend limiting the number to three. It is important to note that SAT score reports are cumulative and institutions see every test you take; however, most document your highest score only during the application process. Students do have the option of sending test scores by "test date" to their chosen institutions, so only the "test date" scores sent are viewed – referred to as *score choice*.

The **SAT** is a multiple-choice reasoning test focusing on three areas:
➢ Evidence-based Reading and Writing
➢ Mathematics
➢ Optional Essay (Advisable, but not required. *Refer to www.fairtest.org for a complete list of US post-secondary institutions that do not require the SAT*).

****Canadian, UK, Korean, Hong Kong, and Australian universities may also require students to take an additional standardized test, especially if an IB diploma is not being pursued.

SAT Subject Tests are one-hour long subject-specific tests that measure knowledge of particular subjects and the ability to apply that knowledge. Only the most selective universities require them. These one-hour tests are offered in the following areas:

Biology E/M	Chemistry	Literature	Physics	U.S. History	World History
Languages (Reading & Listening): Chinese, French, German, Korean, Japanese, Spanish			Languages (Reading only): French, German, Italian, Latin, Modern Hebrew, Spanish		
Math I (Arithmetic, Algebra I, II, & Geometry w/calculator)			Math II (Algebra II, Geometry, Pre-Cal and Trig w/ calculator)		

* Students are only able to take up to three Subject Tests on one test day.

** Students generally may change which Subject Tests they are taking, add additional tests (up to the maximum number of 3 tests), or opt out of Subject Tests for which they have registered, on test day. There are exceptions, however, for Tests which require special equipment or when students require special accommodations.

*** Students are responsible for checking whether the program they are applying to require applicants to submit SAT Subject Test scores.

SAT registration dates:

Test Date	Type	Registration Deadline
March	SAT	Please go to http://www.collegeboard.org/
May	SAT & Subject Test	
June	Subject Tests	
August	SAT & Subject Tests	
October	SAT & Subject Tests	
December	SAT & Subject Tests	

*SAT Subject Tests with Listening only available this date.
**Test Dates are subject to change.

How to register

- Ask your college counsellor for the SSIS test centre code
- Once you have a College Board account created, you will be able to register for an SAT or SAT Subject exam
- You will be asked to create a profile
- The third section in the process is to "Select Test Center"
- Once you start this step, you will get to a section called "Your test Center"
- Select the option to "try searching for a test center by name or city"
- Choose the option "I know the test center code"
- Choose "yes" and enter this code .....
- Select our school and continue your registration

ACT: The ACT is a three-hour test more commonly used by Midwestern US universities/colleges. PSI worldwide accept either the ACT or SAT scores for admission purposes. The ACT consists of four sections: English, Mathematics, Reading Comprehension, and Science Reasoning. Subject test scores range from 1 to 36, with the English, Mathematics, and Reading Tests also providing sub-scores ranging from 1 to 18. The ACT composite score is the average of all four tests. The optional writing test provides a writing score ranging from 2 to 12.

PSIs that require some form of standardized test will accept either the SAT or ACT. A few PSIs require SAT Subject Test scores in addition to ACT scores. While most students earn equivalent scores on the ACT and the SAT, some students do better on the ACT than the SAT or vice versa. Since the tests are designed to be equivalent don't expect that your scores will different greatly between the two tests. Even though the writing test is optional on the ACT, it is still advisable to take it since many colleges require it. Students can register for the ACT online at: www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act.html.

Students who would prefer to take the ACT rather than the SAT should contact their college counsellor for further information.

SAT/SAT Subject Test and ACT FAQ:

1. Should students in Grades 9 and 10 take the SAT/ACT?
   - *No; the SAT/ACT questions are academically designed for students in Grades 11/12.*

2. How do students register for the SAT/ACT?

> ➢ *SAT:* ***collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat***
> ➢ *ACT:* ***www.act.org/***

3. Are non-SSIS students able to write the SAT/ACT at our school?
   - o *No; SSIS is a closed testing center. This is a regulation from the Chinese government.*
   - o *Note: SSIS has **not** offered the ACT since September 2018.*

4. Can students from SWA take the SAT/ACT at our school?
   - o *No; only students holding a valid passport from a country other than China, and with a visa issued by China are able to take the SAT/ACT at SSIS. Therefore, Chinese passport holders are **not** able to write the SAT/ACT in China. .*

5. How do students view their SAT/ACT scores?
   - o *College Board will release scores approximately three weeks after the test date.*
     - ▪ *SAT scores can be viewed at:* ***www.collegeboard.org**.*
   - o *ACT scores can be viewed two weeks after the test date at:* ***www.act.org***

6. When should students take the SAT/ACT?
   - o *It is recommended that students write the SAT/ACT before starting Grade 12 or, at the latest, in the first few months of Semester 1, Grade 12.*

7. Will all my PSIs see all my scores?
   - o *PSIs allow students to select which scores they want to send*
   - o *More information can be found at:* professionals.collegeboard.com/testing/sat-reasoning/scores/policy

8. What is the difference between the PSAT and SAT?
   - o The PSAT is a practice version of the SAT which is slightly shorter and scored out of 1520 instead of 1600 points.

9. What is the purpose or benefit of taking the PSAT?
   - o The PSAT is designed for younger students, while the SAT is intended to be taken at the end of students' grade 11 year. PSAT score reports typically become available in December and provide a detailed summary of students' performance, allowing them to identify areas which may require practice and improvement ahead of sitting the regular SAT.

10. How do I register for the PSAT?
    - o While students must register independently for the regular SAT on College Board, they register for the PSAT directly with the college counsellors at SSIS. The registration fee is paid to the Finance Office.

English proficiency tests:

Students whose first language is not English are recommended to take the TOEFL (Test Of English as a Foreign Language) or the IELTS (International English Language Testing System) before the start of their Grade 12 year. TOEFL/ IELTS scores required by PSIs need to be sent directly by the agency that administers the exam. For more information and registration visit: ***www.ets.org/toefl*** or

www.ielts.org. An increasing number of universities accept the Duolingo English test as evidence also. For further information see *https://englishtest.duolingo.com/*.

Interviews

Not all universities have interviews as a part of their application process, but many either recommend or require an interview on campus, online, or even with an alumnus of the school.

Preparation:
Research the program/university.
Confirm and be punctual (10 minutes early) for the appointment.
  ➤ If your interview is online, ensure potential technicalities are resolved.
Dress appropriately.

Self-reflection:
To further prepare for the interview, consider the following questions:

- Please introduce yourself.
- What are your best academic and personal qualities?
- What is important to you in a university/college and why?
- What area in your life would you like to improve and why?
- What was your proudest moment?
- Please describe a time when you have exhibited leadership in or out of the classroom.
- Do you like to read? What is your favorite book?
- If I gave you a ticket to anywhere in the world, where would you go?
- What three people living or dead would you like to invite to dinner?
- What courses are you in, and what is your favorite subject?
- Describe your ideal PSI and explain why.
- What do you find most meaningful in your life?
- What might you be doing ten years from now?
- If you found $100 how would you use it?
- What do you plan to study in university/college and how did you become interested in this subject/program area?
- What is your extracurricular passion?
- What goals do you have for your university studies and future career?
- Why have you chosen to apply to this particular university?

The interview itself:
Speak with confidence, maintain good posture, and make eye contact.
  ➤ Quick notes may be written down during the interview, but most of the time spent should be talking, not writing.
Be prepared to speak about yourself.
Have questions ready to ask once your interview is finished.

Speak formally; avoid colloquial language (e.g. "like," "you know," "um")
Think before you speak.
Don't be afraid to ask for clarification if you are unsure whether you've understood a question correctly.
Consider and plan talking points, but do not memorize responses or they will sound recited.
Make sure to listen carefully to the interviewer and address their questions rather than merely sharing the information you have prepared.
Use positive body language to indicate engagement and if the interview is held online, remember to look
At the camera occasionally.

After the interview:
Write a short note or e-mail to your interviewer thanking them.
Include in the note a reference to something specific from the interview and ask any additional questions

Resumes:

PSIs may require a resume as part of the application process. Regardless of whether a school requires a resume or not, creating and compiling one is a great way to record one's accomplishments. SSIS encourages students to start keeping a record of their activities, honors, and events they participated in from the beginning of grade 9.

As students complete their applications, a resume serves as a guide when filling out the extra-curricular sections. When interviewing, submitting a resume is strongly recommended, especially when speaking to key individuals in the decision-making process.

Tips for parents

It is great that students and parents will approach this process together, but we all know that at its best, this experience can prepare students for their much desired independence. The following list serves as a reminder for parents:

10. Remember that this process is not about you. No matter how similar your children may be to you, they need to make their own decisions and observations.

9. Support and encouragement are more appropriate than pressure and unsolicited advice. Allow your children to seek you out, rather than imposing your views upon them.

8. Do not use the words "we" or "our" when referring to your children's application process. Those pronouns are indicators that you have become *too* involved.

7. Help them prepare, but let them perform. Encourage them to sleep well and put thought into a university/college visit or meeting with their college counsellor, but once there, step back and let them drive the experience. This is good practice for the next phase of their lives – adulthood.

6. Encourage your children to make their own appointments, phone calls, and emails. When a family arrives at an admissions' office, it's important that the student takes the lead, not the parents. Having control over such details gives them a sense of ownership. Don't be tempted by the excuse that "I'm just saving them time" or "they are too busy" – students will learn to appreciate all the steps it takes to make big things happen if they do them themselves.

5. Allow your children to ask the questions. They have their own set of issues that are important to them.

4. Prepare your children for disappointment. For many students, this is the first time they may experience such rejection. Remind them there is no perfect school and that admissions' decisions do not reflect on their worth as people or your worth as parents.

3. NEVER complete any portion of the application or test registration – yes, even if it is just busy work. That also goes for friends, siblings, counsellors, and whomever else is willing to help. For many PSIs, that overstep would be viewed as a violation of the school's honor policy.

2. Do not let stereotypes or outdated information steer your children away from schools in which they would otherwise have an interest. Veer away from rankings and rumors as they may be based on subjective truths.

1. Remember this process is not about you. It is your child's turn to make independent decisions as this is a part of becoming an adult.

Adapted from Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vermont, USA

APPENDICES

Appendix A: post-secondary institution search websites

Worldwide
www.topuniversities.com
www.studyportals.com

Australia & New Zealand
www.gooduniversitiesguide.com.au
www.studyinaustralia.gov.au
https://studylink.com/study-in-australia/
www.studyinnewzealand.govt.nz
www.universitiesnz.ac.nz

Canada
www.studyincanada.com
www.education411.com
www.universitystudy.ca/
www.canadian-universities.net
www.schoolsincanada.com

China
https://www.china-admissions.com/study-in-china-guide/

Europe
www.eunicas.ie
https://www.studyineurope.eu
http://www.medicalstudyguide.com/medical-universities-in-europe.html

France
https://www.campusfrance.org/en

Germany
https://www.daad.de/de/
https://www.uni-assist.de/en/

Hong Kong
https://www.studyinhongkong.edu.hk/en/

Ireland
https://www.educationinireland.com/en

Japan

https://www.jasso.go.jp/en/index.html

Korea
univ.kcue.or.kr
http://igc.or.kr

Singapore
https://studylink.com/study-in-singapore/
https://digitalsenior.sg/singapore-university-directory/

Scotland
www.studyinscotland.org

United Kingdom
http://study-uk.britishcouncil.org
www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk
www.studyin-uk.com/study-options/foundation/
www.ucas.com

USA
www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org
www.collegenet.com
www.campustours.com
colleges.niche.com
guides.teenlife.com/college
www.unigo.com
http://www.fairtest.org/sites/default/files/Optional-Schools-in-U.S.News-Top-Tiers.pdf
www.yopost-secondary institutiontv.com

Appendix B: Post-secondary institution ranking websites

Refer to pg. 7 about information pertaining to post-secondary institution rankings before browsing any of the following websites. SSIS caution families not to rely too heavily on rankings when researching schools.

www.usnews.com
www.princetonreview.com/college/research/rankings/rankings.asp
www.studentsreview.com
https://www.urapcenter.org/
https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings
http://www.shanghairanking.com/index.html
https://www.leidenranking.com/
www.theguardian.com/education/post-secondary institutionguide
www.macleans.ca/education/post-secondary institution/

Appendix C: Application websites

www.commonapp.org
www.ucas.com
www.ouac.on.ca

Appendix D: Scholarship & financial aid search websites

www.fastweb.com
www.scholarships.com
www.iefa.org
www.collegescholarships.org/financial-aid/
www.scholarshipscanada.com/
https://cef.org.au/student-support/search-for-scholarships/
www.studyinhongkong.edu.hk/en/hong-kong-education/scholarships.php
https://www.studyinkorea.go.kr/en/sub/gks/allnew_invite.do
http://www.european-funding-guide.eu/
https://ec.europa.eu/info/education/study-or-teach-abroad/scholarships-and-student-finance/find-scholarship_en
 https://www.thescholarshiphub.org.uk/
https://www.studyin-uk.com/scholarship-search/
https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/scholarships