

An introduction to:

US Universities

There are a vast number of universities and colleges in the USA and they are generally independent of each other. It is, therefore, difficult to set one “deadline”

- **You need to find out the deadline of each individual university / college and give it to the Universities Co-ordinator in writing as soon as possible after the summer vacation, together with a list of information required from the School**

Deadline for applications: (School) December (but unis might have earlier application deadlines – need to check)

Universities sometimes offer early decision (ED) and early acceptance (EA) options. Check out <https://professionals.collegeboard.org/guidance/applications/early> to see if either of these options are good for you

Please understand that, though you may be applying to the US only, the School has to deal with at least two additional university systems (UK and Germany) with their own deadlines. You must, therefore, let us know as soon as possible the requirements and deadline for each US university / college, to which you wish to apply.

- **You need to be aware of the cost and workload of applying to multiple college before you apply**

US universities tend to require:

- a high standard application (to each individual university / college), which may include:
 - (i) IB Diploma subject details and English language qualifications (ESL students)
 - (ii) an essay / essays written by you (including relevant work experience, CAS projects, skills, personal qualities, extra reading around subject)
 - (iii) one or more recommendations written about you by your teacher(s)
 - (iv) a High School Transcript from LIS. This includes your Grade Point Average (GPA) & Class Rank
 - (v) report cards (Grade 11 & 12)
 - (vi) SAT I / II or ACT test scores
 - (vii) TOEFL test scores (non-native English speakers)
 - (viii) an application fee (can vary significantly.)
- US applications take a long time to complete – by you and by the School. Therefore, you need to start the application process during the summer vacation (Grade11-12) If you are late, the School cannot guarantee meeting the deadline for you. Please note that some US universities / colleges have early deadlines.
- Because of the vast number of universities / colleges and courses in the USA, it's not practicable to use one directory (like the UCAS Directory, UK), which lists every course in every college

- There are some Collegeboard handbooks on universities and colleges available at the school. **THEY ARE FOR REFERENCE ONLY!**
- An efficient way to research US universities / colleges is via the website www.collegeboard.com (see example sheets attached)
- It is very important to be realistic. If you are rejected from all your chosen US universities/colleges, it is because you have not researched thoroughly enough and have applied for universities/colleges too far above your academic standard. It is safest to apply to a range of colleges – with different (but realistic!) grade requirements
- University websites should give guidelines of grades required for entrance (e.g. SAT I results, SAT II results etc.) Once you have taken the SAT I exam and have received your results, you will be able to find the most suitable colleges for you, in terms of academic standards. There are SAT books in IB study room. Ask before you take them!
- Go to website www.collegeboard.com to register taking the SAT I exam. Many universities / colleges require you to submit your results in SAT I. You have to pay to sit this exam and will need a credit card when registering via the website. The exam is normally offered 6 times a year to international students. The nearest test centre to Leipzig is the John F. Kennedy Schule, Berlin. Test days are Saturdays; exams are also possible on Sundays (for students, who cannot attend on Saturday for religious reasons)
- Some universities also require you to take at least one of the SAT II Subject Tests (which are in individual subjects - e.g. Chemistry)
- The ACT is another entrance exam to US universities – run by “American College Testing Program” (not “College Board”)
- Most colleges require applicants whose native language is not English to take the TOEFL entrance exam in English language
- In order to have an idea what the SAT I exam requires, it will be worth you buying books (e.g. from amazon.com). See also <http://store.collegeboard.com> for recommended books. In School, we have some books for reference only – not to be removed from IB study room.
- Study the university website/ prospectus very carefully indeed, taking careful note of the grades required for entrance to each course:
- As long as you are realistic about your academic abilities and study skills and choose wisely, you will find an appropriate course for you in the USA. For example:

Four Year Program

After 4 years, you will earn a Bachelor of Arts Degree or a Bachelor of Science Degree

Two Year Program

Community Colleges, Junior Colleges and some Technical Schools offer 2-year programs. After a 2-year program, you will earn an Associate's Degree. At this point you may be qualified for specific professions or you can transfer into a 4-year college program for another 2 years (in order to earn your Bachelor's Degree). Community Colleges are a great alternative route into higher education. Credits can be transferred!

- The "Ivy League" universities (Harvard, Yale etc) may have special requirements, rules and deadlines. Be clear on these by researching thoroughly.
- **PLEASE NOTE!** If you are not a US citizen, you will need a VISA. Needless to say, you will need the firm offer of a place at a US university/college before you are granted a visa. My best advice to students who are not US citizens is to make contact with the appropriate US Embassy and find out exactly what you need to do and when. If your family is in Germany, contact the US Embassy in Germany via the website: www.usembassy.de. If your family ties are elsewhere, you will need to contact the US Embassy in your country of origin.
- **PLEASE NOTE!** Financial considerations are paramount when considering study in the USA. University fees alone can be \$30,000 per year; on top of this, money will be needed for accommodation, food, clothes, books, leisure, travel etc. US citizens have a good chance of getting a scholarship, especially when applying within their "home State". US citizens need to research thoroughly about scholarships /sponsorship and address this issue as early as possible.
- The School has a lot of work to do for US applications (e.g. recommendations, transcripts). You must allow us enough time to get this done, by being early with your applications.
- **By early September 2018, you need to have drafted your "Essay" & typed up your "Information to be given to referees**

Useful websites

- www.collegeboard.com – the main website for SATs
- <http://act.org/> - the main website for ACTs
- www.commonapp.org – The Common Application (used by over 600 colleges)
- <http://www.internationalstudent.com/school-search/usa/> - a good search tool for US universities
- <http://www.forbes.com/top-colleges/list/> - Forbes ranking of US colleges
- www.aaicu.org – the central website for American colleges overseas
- <http://www.ordoludus.com/10.html> - overview of college tuition fees and living costs, university rankings
- <http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/study-exchange/student.html> - official US State Department site for student visas