

COLLEGE HANDBOOK



CLASS OF 2011

St. Stephen's School
Rome, Italy

Forward

Dear Parents and Class of 2011:

Many of you are about to begin serious planning for college. This is a lengthy and sometimes daunting task. I hope the process will be a positive one for you, and I will do whatever I can to make it so. I am giving you this planning guide so that you won't feel overwhelmed by the instructions and details that come your way in the next year. Please read it in its entirety; it will help you develop a strong sense of the pieces of the process in which that you are about to immerse yourself.

Between January and June, I will meet several times with each junior. My expectation is that you will be an active participant in this process. The object of the meetings is not only to develop a list of appropriate colleges, but for me to get to know each student – his/her strengths, weaknesses, special interests, passions, values. The student questionnaire, a copy of a Curriculum Vitae and the parent questionnaire, most of which should be completed by the time of the first appointment, are each important to the process. Above all, it is essential that you learn how to research colleges and use the resources that are available.

Read through this handbook to get an overview of the process as a whole.

Remember that you are not alone. Although the final responsibility for seeing it through rests with you, your College Counselor, among others, is ready to help you throughout the entire process. To that end, the College Office is open to you daily. You can feel free to schedule a meeting or you can just drop in if you have a quick question.

I look forward to meeting with you soon.

Alison Lewis
College Counselor

Tel: 06-575-0605

e-mail: college.counselor@ststephens-rome.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview: The U.S. and UK Higher Education Systems

The American System of Higher Education	7
The UK System of Higher Education	9

Applying to U.S. Universities

Activities to Assist You to Begin your Search	12
Selectivity: Choosing and Being Chosen	15
What is most important in the selection process?	
Responsibilities During the Process	18
Students	
Parents	
Counselor	
St. Stephen's University Attendance History.....	20
U.S./Canada College Planning Calendar	21

Applying to UK Universities

Types of Institutions	26
Location	
Courses	
Qualifications	27
Degrees	
Duration of Study	
Minimum Entry Requirements.....	27
Methods of study	
What is the best course	
Tuition fees and living costs	
Cost of Living	29
A Brief Summary of the UCAS Scheme	30
Calendar for University Entry UK 2010.....	32

All About Testing

What is the PSAT?	36
What is the SAT?	
How important is it?	
When should you take the SAT Subject Tests?	37
What is the ACT?	
Registration and Fees.....	37
Special Accommodations	
TOEFL.....	38
Suggested Time Table for College Testing	
Prep Courses for College Testing	
Frequently Asked Questions	
Suggested Time Table for Testing	40
Test Taking Tips.....	42
Getting to the American Overseas School for the SAT tests	

Written Components of the Application

Essays	44
Essay Writing Tips - U.S.....	45
Essay Writing Tips – UK.....	46
Obtaining Teacher and Counselor Recommendations.....	47

Financial Aid

Financing an Education in the U.S.....	49
Tuition	
Financial Aid	

Miscellany

Regarding Summer Activities.....	53
Campus Visit Log.....	54
Some Useful Websites.....	56
Glossary: The Vocabulary of U.S./Canadian Degrees.....	60
Glossary: The Vocabulary of UK Degrees.....	63

Homework for Students and Parents

Summer Assignment.....	65
Student Questionnaire.....	66
Parent Questionnaire.....	69

OVERVIEW: THE U.S. AND UK HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEMS



THE AMERICAN SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education refers to post-secondary institutions (after high school) that offer Associate, Bachelor, Master or Doctoral degrees. Because everyone in the United States is encouraged to get as much education as possible, there are many colleges and universities in the country (over 3,000) and the differences among them may be extensive. If you think seriously about where you apply and do the right research, you will not only find colleges that suit your needs but you will also find a greater range of choices than if you only focus on what you've heard of through friends or relatives.

TYPES OF INSTITUTIONS IN THE U.S.

Junior and Community Colleges

These schools offer two-year academic programs of two basic types: either technical training in a specific profession or a general academic program for students planning to transfer to a four-year degree program. Students graduating from junior or community colleges receive Associate degrees.

Colleges

In the United States, the term "college" refers to either a small liberal arts institution offering liberal arts majors, or a collection of departments in one specific area within a larger university. In terms of the independent institutions that call themselves colleges, all offer academic programs leading to a **Bachelor's** degree in liberal arts areas such as language, history, and science. Others, however, do grant professional degrees in fields such as teaching, social work, business, and sometimes engineering. The four or five years leading to the Bachelor's degree are the **undergraduate** years. Some colleges also offer **Master's** (advanced) degrees in selected fields of study depending upon the strength of the faculty and the specialization of the institution, but for the most part colleges do not have graduate programs.

Universities

Universities offer advanced degrees as well as Bachelor's. On university campuses there is more specialization among the faculty and more emphasis on research and publication. For administrative purposes, many universities, such as Boston University, Columbia, New York University, Syracuse, and the University of Pennsylvania have schools or colleges which grant degrees in specific areas such as the College of Arts and Sciences, College of Engineering, College of Law, College of Business, College of Medicine, etc. The degree awarded by the college depends upon the level of the program and external requirements for professional degrees.

What's the Difference?

No matter if you attend a college or a university, the phrase "going to college" means the same thing. The main difference between a college and a university is that a college offers a collection of degrees, while a university is a collection of colleges that offer degrees. When you go to a university you are going to be graduating from one of their colleges, such as the business college. As to which is better, it depends on what you want. Single colleges tend to be smaller with smaller class sizes and more personal attention from faculty, while universities are bigger, with faculty time and attention divided between research and teaching.

Liberal Arts

Liberal arts refers to the educational program of a college where the emphasis is on broad preparation across several academic disciplines, non-technical courses, or majors such as biology, economics, English, history, mathematics, philosophy, etc.

Many liberal arts colleges claim that their strength lies in the priority given to teaching by the faculty rather than research or publication. Students attending a liberal arts college do not have to declare their “major” or area of concentration until the end of the second year. The intent is to prepare students for “life.”

INSTITUTIONAL FUNDING

Unlike many other countries where higher education is supported primarily by the government, in the United States there are both public and private institutions.

The Public Institution

Since the state or municipality in which they are located finances them, public institutions are either required to admit or give priority to students from within the funding area. Tuition is lower than at private institutions. Because the support is primarily through tax dollars, public pressure and financial exigencies often have a direct impact on the goals, policies and programs.

The Private Institution

The private institution receives most of its financial support from the tuition paid by students, funds provided by individual donors (called endowments), and grants from private and public foundations and programs. Tuition is much higher than at public institutions. The strength of many private colleges comes from the autonomy of the institution and the flexibility to develop and offer new programs to meet identified needs.

THE UK SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION

HOW IT WORKS

Undergraduate Degree Courses

Universities and some institutions of higher education offer degrees at the undergraduate level (first degrees) such as Bachelor of Arts (BA), Bachelor of Science (BSc), Bachelor of Education (Bed), Bachelor of Engineering (Beng).

Undergraduate degrees normally last for three years. Sandwich courses, which involve a period of work experience outside the college between periods spent in academic study, and Scottish degrees, normally last for four years. Unlike the system in the United States, you do not apply as a generalist to a specific university. Instead, you must select a specific subject or course to study and meet the qualifications for your selected subject (Scotland is different; you declare a major at the end of the second year of study, and the degree lasts four years). Many universities publish their qualification requirements for each subject in its prospectus, on their website and on the UCAS website (www.ucas.com).

TYPES OF INSTITUTIONS IN THE UK

There is a wide choice of educational institutions in Britain, Scotland and Wales, often offering very similar courses. Before deciding on where to apply, you must decide which type of institution will suit you best. This will partly depend on the level of qualification you hope to gain.

Further and Higher Education

Higher education includes advanced courses of a standard similar, equal or higher than an undergraduate degree.

Further education describes other courses from basic numeracy and literacy up to pre-degree level.

Colleges of Further Education (FE)

FE colleges offer a broad range of courses including GCSE and A-levels (SCE in Scotland), access courses, professional and English language qualifications.

Colleges of Higher Education (HE)

Colleges of HE, including colleges of education, offer courses leading to degrees, postgraduate qualifications, professional and vocational qualifications, and higher education diplomas.

Universities

Universities offer higher education qualifications, including undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, and professional qualifications. Many also offer access programs, which prepare adult learners from non-traditional backgrounds and under-represented groups for admission to undergraduate education. The former polytechnics in England and Wales, and most central institutions in Scotland, now have university status.

Private colleges

There are many private or 'independent' colleges whose courses are independent of government funding. They offer various courses to prepare students for professional, technical or vocational exams, English language exams and, in some cases, degree courses. The quality and efficiency of private colleges are not officially monitored, but there are a few organizations that accredit colleges whose standards have been inspected and approved. Accreditation is carried out by the British Accreditation Council (BAC), which provides a list of accredited colleges.

APPLYING TO U.S. UNIVERSITIES



ACTIVITIES TO ASSIST YOU IN BEGINNING YOUR RESEARCH

You are about to enter a period of self-examination, research, and planning that will lead to a decision that will have a marked impact on your future. This is a two-pronged decision: deciding which colleges you will apply to and deciding which college you will attend.

EXAMINE YOURSELF:

How do your dreams and views of yourself match what you have done?

- What subjects do you like best? In what courses do you do well?
- What are your hobbies or interests outside of school? What talents or skills do you use?
- What are your strong points? Do you have strong organizational skills? Leadership ability? Creative ability?
- What are your values? Are you competitive? Adventurous? Do you aspire to fame? Money? Power? Is family life, service to others, religion, etc. important to you?

Some of you may have taken the career assessment test offered through the *Step One* company, that helped you identify your future career and course interests. Another step in examining yourself was in answering the questions in the Student Questionnaire that you completed last semester. Answering these questions and articulating your ideas in writing helps you clarify your needs.

RESEARCH TO DETERMINE YOUR COLLEGE CHOICES

There are several criteria that may influence your decision about the colleges that you consider:

- **Size:** small (less than 4000), medium (4000-10,000), large (more than 10,000).
- **Location:** metropolitan area, suburb of a big city, small town, rural area, compact campus or different centers in the same city, convenience and distance from home, weather, nearby and off-campus recreation and opportunities
- **Country or region:** Italy, Great Britain, Scotland, East Coast (U.S.) or West Coast (U.S.), etc.
- **Type of Institution:** Public or private, religious or non-sectarian, co-ed or single-sex, comprehensive university, liberal college, art school, technical school, traditional or progressive.
- **Academic Program:** Liberal arts offerings, majors offered, pre-professional programs, cooperative programs (work/study), wide range of offerings vs. specialized courses, strict requirements or wide freedom in study program, freshman seminar programs, research opportunities, Advanced Placement / International Baccalaureate credit or advanced standing, study abroad program.
- **Facilities:** On-campus housing available? Guaranteed? Required? Sports facilities (inter-mural possibilities or only competitive sports)? Library facilities (adequate resources in area of interest, hours, easy access to books and periodicals)? Computer facilities in resident halls, in the main library, in the academic department?
- **Students:** Homogeneous vs. diverse backgrounds, high percent of commuters (live at home), fraternity /sorority influence on student life, % of international students, minority students, or non-traditional students (older, often part-time).

- **Student Life:** Large residence halls, apartments, houses. Availability of rooms, system of housing allocation, meal plans. Campus activities, clubs, and organizations. Cultural opportunities on campus or in community.
- **Atmosphere:** Competitive? Relaxed? Religious emphasis? Artsy? Strong social consciousness? How tough will the work be? Will I be at the top or the bottom of the class? Career or graduate school oriented?
- **Cost:** Can I afford it? Is it worth it? What financial aid is available? Are there non-institutional scholarships available for which I'm eligible? Loans vs. work/study?
- **Getting in:** How competitive is admission? How have other St. Stephen's graduates fared in the past? Do I have any family ties to the university/college? What kind of recommendations will I get from my teachers and college counselor? What kind of external examination results do I expect? How are my standardized tests: SAT (SAT-I), SAT subject tests, TOEFL? Do I have a strong activities and/or community service record? What special talents or abilities can I present to strengthen my application?

TAKE YOUR RESEARCH FURTHER

- Meet with the college counselor to review your academic credentials, set a schedule for taking college entrance tests and develop a preliminary list of colleges.
- Become familiar with the resources in the College Office.
- Meet with visiting college representatives who are an excellent source of firsthand information about their colleges.

PLAN YOUR COLLEGE SEARCH

Follow these logical steps:

- Write or email colleges that interest you
- Review college guide books and websites about the colleges
- Decide which colleges you would like to visit
- Schedule campus visits and interviews where possible
- Prepare for visits and interviews
- Discuss your impressions of the college visits with the college counselor
- Review application materials
- Decide upon the final list of colleges

HOW MANY COLLEGES SHOULD A STUDENT APPLY TO?

As the process of college selection is an individual one, based upon the student's interests, accomplishments and needs, there is no one answer that applies to everyone. However, applying to more than eight colleges may be superfluous.

Although the schools to which you will be applying may vary in selectivity, each should meet the general criteria that you have established.

There are four broad categories into which colleges under consideration should be placed:

- **SUPER REACH** – These are schools that are extremely difficult even for the student with straight A's and perfect SAT scores. Think Harvard, Yale, Princeton. If you are a possible candidate go ahead and put one on your list, but do not put more than one,

and do not stack your list with Ivy League schools that accept only 10% of their applicant pool.

- **REACH** – The most selective schools representing your ideal choice, a possible risk, but still within a realistic range for you in terms of academic survival at college.
- **TARGET** – Schools that usually accept students whose credentials tend to match yours. To determine which schools fit into this category, you should review the entering class profile of the college, which is available for US applicants in reference books on file in the College Office and the college websites.
- **LIKELY** – A school that still embodies all the qualities you are seeking, but is a confident choice in terms of the type of student that the college tends to admit.

As a general rule, applying to two “reaches”, three or four “targets” and at least one “likely” college should be sufficient. Students applying to the U.S. may decide to apply to one or two more, for a total of eight schools.

TWO PHILOSOPHIC POINTS:

- 1) The junior and senior years of high school require a decision from you that will impact the next three or four years of your life: choosing a college. To the extent that the college choice shapes other choices--lifestyle, values, occupations, place of residence, even a spouse--it may a very important decision of your life.
- 2) You will go through six related but distinct stages of your college search:
 - unaware --> interested
 - interested --> inquiry
 - inquiry --> campus visitor
 - visitor --> applicant
 - applicant --> accepted
 - accepted --> enrolled

Note that while the college chooses at one stage (the stage that gets most of the attention), you choose five times. Also, in all likelihood, both your criteria and your judgements will change somewhat as you move from stage to stage. For example, you may at stages 1 and 2 consider large universities like Michigan State and Ohio State, but eliminate them from stage 3 and 4. You may look more carefully at curricular differences, location, and campus atmosphere at schools like Bates, Middlebury, or Bowdoin that seem at least initially "alike".

SELECTIVITY: CHOOSING AND BEING CHOSEN

What is a “good” college or university? Too often, it is equated with a handful of names and great competition for admission. Competition for admission and quality of education are not necessarily synonymous, and there are numerous examples of well-regarded colleges that accept 40%, 50%, 60% of their applicant pools as opposed to the 15%-25% accepted by most highly selective institutions. For example, the University of Rochester in the U.S. is widely acknowledged as a distinguished university. In 2007, it accepted 62% of its applicants. Which is to say that if one qualifies (i.e. meets the demanding criteria outlined in the guidebooks) for admission, the chances are better than 50% that one will be accepted whereas nearby Cornell, which shares many applicants with Rochester, accepts about 30% of its candidates. That is, students must compete for admission. If you work on matching the institution to your preferences, interest, and abilities, you will find that you will have a list of very good choices that range across selectivity criteria but are all a good fit for you. Making these matches asks for active investigation by you and by your counselor but it is this approach that will generate six or seven sensible application choices next fall, and they should all be colleges or universities you would be happy to attend.

WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT IN THE SELECTION PROCESS?

The following is a short list of the major criteria used by selective colleges in the United States in a general rank order. Keep in mind, however, since there are no standardized criteria for schools to follow, individual institutions may differ concerning which of these areas they consider to be of greater importance than others. UK universities consider the same criteria overall except that they do not generally look at transcripts; instead, they consider International Baccalaureate, Advanced Placement, and SAT scores.

The candidate’s academic transcript record. (grade point average, approximate rank in class, rigor of courseload). U.S. college applicants normally have to present their transcripts for grades 9 through 12, from which their GPA (grade point average) may be calculated. St. Stephen’s uses the conversion: A = 4.0, A- = 3.7, B+ = 3.3, B = 3.0, B- = 2.7, C+ = 2.3, C = 2.0, C- = 1.7, D+ = 1.3, D = 1.0, D- = 0.7, F = 0 (grades of A+ and F+ are not given). Each grade on the student’s transcript can be converted to a number according to this scheme and the average is then computable.

St. Stephen’s does not rank students by G.P.A. Small class size, high rates of turnover among international school students, and the wide variety of marking systems from which our students come to us make meaningful ranking impossible. In lieu of a ranking scheme, we prepare a grade distribution chart of classes that the juniors took, showing the grades that were received in each class. This chart is attached to each applicant’s transcript, along with the school profile, and sent out to schools in December.

The Essay. Here you have an important opportunity to say something about yourself that moves beyond lists and more quantified data. It is the single aspect of the process over which you have total control. Think about it as a way to add a new dimension to your application. Write about something important to you. Use your own voice. Small incidents yield powerful stories. Often the seemingly mundane yields the most powerful insights. It is

short so make every word count. **There is no forgiveness for essays that are not very well-written, carefully edited, and proofread.**

SAT I and SAT Subject Test scores. These standardized tests are widely used by college admissions officers as a kind of control or verifier in conjunction with transcript grades. While they are not by themselves crucial to a candidate's admissions chances at a selective college, SAT I scores for a successful candidate usually fall within a band or range that the college demands of its applicants. This type of data can be found in the general college handbooks or the college view books. Selective college admissions officers frequently state that the combination of transcript grades and SAT scores are the single best predictor of likely success of a given candidate at their college. More selective colleges ask for the results of SAT Subject Tests scores in addition to the traditional SAT I scores. *I encourage students to do both the SAT I and at least two Subject tests regardless of where they apply.*

Recommendations from teachers, advisors and others. Many, but by all means not all, colleges require a written assessment from the student's recent teachers or others who have known the student well. In addition, many of these colleges request a statement from the College Counselor, which at St. Stephen's takes the form of a "summary appraisal," a composite portrait and judgement written by the College Counselor reflecting the views of the faculty about the candidate. Warning: it is in general not advisable for candidates to supply too many endorsements to any one college. Inundating an admissions committee with unsolicited recommendations is likely to merely annoy the committee, which has literally tens of thousands of pieces of paper to contend with annually.

Extracurricular activities. Colleges and universities are usually very interested in the degree of so-called "extracurricular" work and involvement of their candidates. This may consist of student clubs and student council work, hobbies or interests in which the student invests considerable time and/or where the achievement of the student is noteworthy; community service work, special talents (in music, art, theater, etc.), achievement in sports, interesting background (travel abroad, unusual work experience, etc.), foreign language fluency, and the like. Overall, the purpose is to discover what, if anything, may distinguish two otherwise similar candidates, to determine whether a student is likely to contribute to the extracurricular life of this potential college, and to see if any given student's academic record is that of a narrow drudge or that of a lively, multi-faceted personality.

The alumni connection. Many private colleges in the U.S. give some preference, on the margin, to candidates who are the children of their alumni. Loyal alumni organizations and the maintenance of substantial alumni giving to a college are obvious motives here.

Residents of a given state of the U.S. For the state-supported colleges and universities, some preference will usually be given to applicants whose parents are residents of the state in which the student is applying; as a corollary, some state universities have numerical quotas on the numbers of out-of-state students they can accept. In addition, it is worth noting here that costs at state universities for "in-state" students are notably lower than for out-of-state students. Note: Many public universities have strict rules about determining residency status – often they want the student to have lived in a state for a

certain number of years immediately prior to attend the institution, so read carefully the fine print.

Interview. Many of the most prestigious U.S. colleges require interviews face-to-face with their applicants. For St. Stephen's students, this may be done either in the summer of the junior year on a visit to their prospective colleges or here in Rome for those colleges that have alumni or their representatives interviewing for them. For the great majority of colleges, however, interviewing, especially of candidates overseas, is not a requirement, and not having an interview will not prejudice a student's admission prospects.

TOEFL exam results. Some U.S. colleges and universities require that non-U.S. nationals whose mother tongue is not English submit the results of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). This requirement applies despite the fact that, as a St. Stephen's student, you should have been working and studying in the English language for at least some of your secondary school career. Make sure to verify that the college or university won't take an alternative test like the SAT I, or the IB. The TOEFL is given electronically in Rome during most of the year, and is generally considered to be quite easy for St. Stephen's students. Registration information is available at <http://www.ets.org>.

RESPONSIBILITIES DURING THE UNIVERSITY/COLLEGE SELECTION AND APPLICATION PROCESS

Gaining admission to a college or university is a complex process which can become even more so from abroad. If done correctly, it takes a considerable amount of time, energy and discipline. For the student to be as successful as we would like him or her to be, special assistance must be provided.

The St. Stephen's faculty and staff will be as supportive as possible during this exciting period in the student's life. Nevertheless, we view the entire process as a team effort. In the past, St. Stephen's students have been successful in their college and university choices. By working together, we will have continued success.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Give the college counselor as much information about yourself as possible.

Submit your answers to the Student Questionnaire before your first college meeting. Also, make sure to give your CV to the counselor. Get all of your forms in on time.

Set up a meeting with the College Counselor to initiate your university/college search. Be ready to share your ideas and work out an individualized program to research the right college options for you.

Be Organized Keep good files and folders of important information and deadlines.

Keep your parents informed of what you are doing. Your parents are an integral part of this process and it is important that they are involved in the university/college selection process.

- a. If they are not able to attend your meeting with the College Counselor, share with them the information on colleges you received.
- b. Throughout the year, share information from the College Counselor with your parents. Make sure they know about college fairs, open houses and parent evenings at the school.

Keep the College Counselor informed of what you are doing.

Students and the college counselor work together to complete applications. The college counselor needs to be aware of where you are applying and what your deadlines are in order to make sure applications are completed on time and properly.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Continue to be loving, caring, supportive and understanding. Although it may not always be easy, we urge parents to encourage the student to take the lead in this process.

Try to stand back a bit. If a son or daughter does not seem to be taking an active approach, it can be tempting for parents to step in and take charge. Instead, try contacting the counselor for advice on how to motivate the student.

Help out where you can. Parents can help by staying informed about deadlines, attending meetings, communicating with the counselor and, let us not forget, writing checks!

Visit Schools. Parents can also help by taking their son or daughter to visit colleges. We find that students often return with new impressions about places that they knew only from written materials, photos, and what people had told them.

COLLEGE COUNSELOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Get to know the students while providing a positive, constructive and supportive approach throughout the university/college selection process.

Conduct individual and group sessions on pertinent topics concerning the university/college selection.

Write Counselor reports and Secondary School Reports for each student.

Mail students' transcripts to colleges.

Keep as up-to-date as possible on information relating to the university/college search.

Advise the student on the most appropriate academic program for university/college admissions.

Advise parents on issues of cost and financial aid

Communicate with parents in meetings and through the monthly parent newsletter.

Communicate with students during morning meeting contact EVERY week and via regular e-mail contact

Be available to students and parents for drop-in and scheduled appointments

St. Stephen's University Attendance History

University Choices

Approximately 100% of St. Stephen's School graduates enroll into four-year colleges or universities. In the past three years, 87% have enrolled immediately and 13% have elected either volunteer work or a year of travel prior to university. Graduates of St. Stephen's school from the past three years have matriculated to the following colleges and universities:

USA/Canada: Allegheny College; Arizona State University; Bard College; Barnard College; Beloit College; Boston College; Boston University; Brown University; Connecticut College; Dickinson College; Duke University; Eugene Lang College; Evergreen State College; Fort Lewis College; George Mason University; The George Washington University; Georgetown University; Grinnell College; Gustavus Adolphus College; Hampshire College; Johns Hopkins University; Lewis & Clark College; McGill University; Michigan Technological University; Middlebury College; New York University; University of North Florida; University of Notre Dame; Ohio Wesleyan University; Parsons School of Design; Pace University; Plattsburgh State University; Reed College; Santa Clara University; Sarah Lawrence College; School; Texas A&M University, Texas State University; Corpus Christi; University of Toronto; Tufts University; Trinity College; Vassar College; University of Vermont; West Virginia University; Wesleyan University; University of Wisconsin; Yale University.

Worldwide: American University of Paris (France); American University of Rome (IT); Architectural Association School of Architecture (UK); University of the Arts London (UK); University of Bath (UK); Università Bocconi (IT); University of Brighton (UK); University of Bristol (UK); Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College (UK); University of Cambridge (UK); City University (UK); University College London (UK); Courtauld Institute of Art (UK); University of Cumbria (UK); University of Durham (UK); University of Edinburgh (UK); European Institute of Design (SP); Goldsmiths College (UK); University of Glasgow (UK); University of Greenwich (UK); Heriot Watt University (UK); Imperial College of Science and Technology (UK); Istituto Marangoni (IT); John Cabot University (IT); Keele University (UK); University of Kent (UK); King's College (UK); Kingston University (UK); Les Roches (SZ); University of Leeds (UK); University of London (UK); London School of Economics (UK); LUISS (IT); Newcastle University (UK); University of Nottingham (UK); University of Oxford (UK); University of Reading (UK); Royal Holloway University (UK); University of Southampton (UK); School of Oriental and African Studies (UK); University of St. Andrews (UK); St. George's College (UK); University of Stirling (UK); University of Surrey (UK); University of Sussex (UK); University of Warwick (UK); University of Westminster (UK); National Universities in Australia, Denmark, Germany, Holland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Pakistan, and Venezuela.

COLLEGE PLANNING CALENDAR¹

GRADE 11

Month	Task
December/ January	<input type="checkbox"/> Attend PSAT result review with college counselor
February	<input type="checkbox"/> Evaluate PSAT performance and set up a study plan for May/June Administration of SAT I
	<input type="checkbox"/> Attend college planning evening with parents
	<input type="checkbox"/> Schedule family meeting with counselor
	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete and give to College Counselor before meeting: Student Questionnaire Parent Questionnaire
March	<input type="checkbox"/> Meet with College Counselor
	<input type="checkbox"/> Generate a long list of colleges to research based on PSAT scores and your GPA
	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete Curriculum Vitae
	<input type="checkbox"/> Junior Meeting to discuss testing schedule/SAT review
	<input type="checkbox"/> Arrange for any spring visits to colleges/universities
	<input type="checkbox"/> Draft Personal Statement
April	<input type="checkbox"/> Meet with Director of Studies: discuss Senior program
	<input type="checkbox"/> Deadline for May SAT registration

¹ A suggestion to all...Tear out these calendar planning sheets and put them above your desk or somewhere where you will see them often. Refer to them regularly and check off each item as you meet each deadline.

May

- SAT I + Subject tests @ AOSR (7:45am)

- Meet with Counselor for update on summer plans
- Discuss senior classes with Counselor
- Select two teachers for a confidential recommendation. Pick up appropriate form in the College Office. Speak with teachers.
- Make arrangements for summer college visits

June

- SAT testing @ AOSR

July/Aug

- Summer Job? Summer Internship?
- Read and research information about colleges
- Complete at least one essay for the Common Application (or other application) personal statement
- Evaluate SAT performance and prepare for re-takes
- Visit Colleges
- Request applications and information from colleges
- Shorten long list to 8-12 colleges

GRADE 12

September

- September: Registration for October SAT.
- Meet with Counselor to update and prepare final list

- Attend meetings of college visits
- Late September: Deadline to register for November SAT
- Choose two teachers to write letters of recommendation
- By September 30: Submit

- Revised Curriculum Vitae
- List of teachers who will write recommendations for you

October

- SAT Testing @ AOSR
- Deadline to register for December SAT I + Subject Tests
- October --- ACT
- Work on applications and essay revisions
- Mail Early Action/Early Decision I Applications

November

- SAT Testing @ AOSR
- Meet with College Counselor (update/essay revision)
- Check status of teacher recommendations
- Register for December ACT
- University of California Schools deadline (November 30)
- November 24: Complete applications, turn in all secondary school forms for U.S.

December

- December 1st: Final deadline to turn in all Secondary School Report forms to college counselor
- SAT Testing @ AOSR

- ACT
- Deadline to register for January SAT Testing
- Send all applications
- Request or verify that all scores are officially reported by SAT/ACT/TOEFL to colleges
- Notification sent to ED/EA candidates

January

- January 1: Opening date to file financial aid forms
- Thank you notes to Teachers who wrote recommendation letters
- January 1 or 15: Applications due at selective colleges

February

- Send any remaining applications
- Closing date for financial aid forms: Feb. 15

April

- April 1 - or earlier - admissions decisions from U.S. colleges due

May

- May 1: Acceptance notification due at chosen U.S. colleges (June 30th for UK universities)
- Politely notify other colleges of your final decision

APPLYING TO UK UNIVERSITIES



GENERAL INFORMATION: UK HIGHER EDUCATION

TYPES OF INSTITUTIONS

As outlined briefly in the beginning of the handbook, before any application for a higher education course is completed, it is important to consider the type of institution.

University There are over 300 universities and colleges to choose from, and some of these have a number of colleges within the university. The institutions previously known as "polytechnics" have become "universities." They are often referred to as the "new universities."

Specialist College of printing, art and design, drama, building, agriculture, etc.

College of Further Education, some of which offer one-year foundation or access course prior to university entry.

College or Institute of Higher Education, some of which provide teacher-training courses.

LOCATION

Having decided on the type of institution, it is important to consider the location of the institution. This choice may be based on:

- the size of institution
- the size of city or town in which it is located
- distance from home and transportation connections
- social atmosphere of institution

It is worth taking time to think about these factors and to work out which institutions and places are more attractive to your attitudes and preferences.

COURSES

Careful choice of the subject and the course is very important. You may choose to:

- continue with a familiar academic subject, previously taken at IB or AP level
- try a new academic subject
- take a combined studies course which leaves options open for a delayed choice of the final year subject. "Combined sciences" and "combined studies" at universities and modular programs at "new universities" allow for later choice and specialization.
- choose a subject with direct career links, such as business studies, finance and accounting, management, engineering
- pick a "sandwich course" which mixes periods of full-time study at college with work experience in industry or commerce
- choose a course which offers a year abroad which often adds a year to the program

QUALIFICATIONS

- In assessing a student's chances of getting a place at a higher education institution, the student's IB/AP results or predicted results have to be weighed. It is well known, for example, that it is very difficult to get an offer in medicine or veterinary science. The reason is that there are a restricted number of places on first-degree courses in these subjects and the number of potential applicants far outnumbers the available places. Therefore the universities can ask for and expect the highest grades. Equally high grades are expected for courses, such as law and business, which are very popular, as well as entry to Oxford and Cambridge for almost any course.
- It is wise to have some idea of the requirements expected for the course that a student is considering. Clearly if the applicant's expectations of IB results are modest (24 points), it would be impractical to apply for a degree course in a popular subject at a university. (IB Students can see the counselor at the end of the school year in early June to obtain early prediction information which will help in selecting an appropriate selection of courses)
- Before applying, **every candidate should check the university prospectus, the UCAS website or e-mail the admissions office to determine whether s/he has the correct entry qualifications in terms of their IB/AP subjects.** In special cases, a letter directly to the admissions tutor of the university is advisable.

DEGREES

These include Bachelor of Arts (BA), Bachelor of Science (BSc), Bachelor of Engineering (BEng), Bachelor of Commerce (BComm) and Bachelor of Education (BEd). The universities give their own degrees.

DURATION OF STUDY

- England/Wales 3 years (nine 10-week terms)
- Scotland 4 years (eight 15-week terms)
- Buckingham University 2 years (eight 10-week terms)
- sandwich and foundation course degree programs 4/5 years

MINIMUM ENTRY REQUIREMENTS FOR UNIVERSITIES

- IB diploma (24 points) or AP exams (3 passes) with SAT I
- Individual universities make offers that usually specify minimum IB/AP grades in specific subjects.
- Consult the *Naviance* database for offers received by past St. Stephen's graduates.

METHODS OF STUDY

Having made a choice of subject, the next step is to determine the way in which it is studied.

- It is wrong to suppose that courses with the same title have the same content. The potential student should check the prospectuses of at least six different universities to see what is actually involved in studies of a particular subject. The wide variation in content may well come as a surprise.
- The prospectus should explain how the subject is taught: tutorial, seminar, dissertation, fieldwork, case studies.
- Another important consideration is whether a single subject is to be taken throughout the course or if a combined or joint course would be more attractive.

WHAT IS THE BEST COURSE?

This question, which is regularly asked by parents and students, is impossible to answer: Best for whom? Best for what? But one way of attempting to provide an answer is to say that the choice of a course must be based on the same criteria used in choosing the right subject, in choosing the right course that incorporates this subject, and in choosing the right institution.

All these factors depend on personal attitudes, opinions and needs. The best institution will not necessarily be the one with the highest academic reputation. A student may instinctively or logically decide that another place would be more suited to his or her personality and needs. The best subject may not be the one in which the student achieved the best IB/AP mark.

The most important consideration is to think about the options, and not make a judgment based on inadequate research or on hearsay.

TUITION FEES AND LIVING COSTS

Tuition fees are usually set by the academic institutions themselves. Fees charged are divided into two categories: **home** (EU countries) and **overseas** (non-EU countries). The decision as to whether you pay “home” or “overseas” fees rests entirely with individual institutions.

Home candidate: Part of the tuition fees is reimbursed by the British government or LEA (Local Educational Authority). In general, to qualify you must be a EU (European Union) national (or the child of an EU national) and your parents must live and work in a EU country for the three years prior to your university entrance. For further information see the College Counselor.

Overseas candidate: The full tuition fees are paid by the parents.

2009-2010 Tuition rates: The British Council's website has a series of information sheets that details fees for both EC and Non EU candidates. You can access this information at http://www.britishcouncil.org/education/eduinfosh/eduin_index.htm.

COST OF LIVING

Residence Hall fees vary and housing is not guaranteed on all campuses. In general, a residence hall room with half board in London costs approximately £120 per week and elsewhere £90 per week. An individual student should plan on minimally £900 monthly to cover all living expenses such as accommodation, food, clothes, books, etc. See specific university prospectuses for estimated costs.

PLAN YOUR COLLEGE SEARCH

Follow these logical steps:

- Write or email colleges that interest you
- Review literature and websites about the colleges
- Decide which colleges you would like to visit
- Schedule campus visits and interviews where possible
- Prepare for visits and interviews
- Discuss your impressions of the colleges visits with a college counselor
- Review application materials
- Decide upon the final list of colleges

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE UCAS SCHEME

UCAS stands for the Universities and Colleges Admissions System for the UK. All applications are processed via UCAS. The applicant can list on the UCAS application up to **five choices** of courses at institutions in the UCAS scheme. The courses should be entered in the order in which the institutions offering them are listed in the *UCAS Directory*.

An applicant for 2011 entry (or for deferred entry in 2012) should complete the application on-line in the autumn of 2010. UCAS acknowledges receipt of the form by mailing the applicant an acknowledgement card. The application is then processed.

After the application has been processed, UCAS issues an acknowledgement letter confirming the applicant's choices and providing the **UCAS number**. At the same time copies of the application are sent to each of the institutions that the candidate has listed. Each institution considers the application independently and sends its decision to the applicant via UCAS. **Decisions** may come in any order and the times taken to make them may vary, except for Art & Design Route B courses where the decisions will be made in interview preference order and according to a fixed timetable. Offers may be either **unconditional or conditional** upon forthcoming examination results.

With the last decision the applicant will be sent a **statement of decisions** with instructions on how to reply to all offers that have been received. The applicant can accept one offer firmly and, if the offer is conditional, can hold one other offer as insurance. Following publication of **examination results**, institutions will make final decisions on applicants who are holding conditional offers by comparing their results with the offers made. UCAS will send **confirmation of offers** to successful applicants and details of the options open to those who have been unsuccessful.

Applicants whose places are confirmed are **committed** to them unless they withdraw completely from the UCAS system. If applicants are made an offer at Confirmation for a changed course, year and/or, point of entry, they are not obliged to accept it and will be sent a letter giving details of the courses of action open to them. If applicants are unsuccessful at Confirmation, or hold no offers from their original application, or apply after 30 June, they are eligible to enter Clearing.

The object of **Clearing** is to fill any remaining vacancies in institutions and to place suitable applicants who have been unsuccessful so far, or who have applied late. The integrity and success of the UCAS scheme depends upon institutions and applicants clearly understanding and observing their respective commitments. If difficulties arise UCAS will do what it can to help applicants, in consultation with the institutions concerned.

Extra is also a possibility. This relatively new option allows for students who have not received an offer from any of their choices, or who have decided to decline all offers, to

choose another school to which to apply. Extra begins at the end of February and ends at the June. Students can only choose one university at a time.

Application dates

Applications for 2011 entry should reach UCAS **between 15 September 2010 and 15 January 2011**, except for the following:

- applications for courses at Oxford or Cambridge should be submitted to UCAS by **15 October 2010** (this means finishing and sending the application to me by October 1);
- applications for courses leading to a professional qualification in medicine (i.e. with a course code of A100, A101, A103, A104, A106), Dentistry (i.e. with a course code A200, A203, A204, A205 or A206) and Veterinary Science/Medicine (i.e. with a course code of D100 or D101) should be submitted to UCAS by **15 October 2010** (see above note). Forms received after 15 October 2010 will be forwarded to the universities for consideration at their discretion;
- applications for courses in Art and Design sometimes have later deadlines, so make sure to consult UCAS and the universities for details.
- If an applicant is applying from outside the UK or EU for one course only and already has the necessary qualifications, he/she can apply at any time. The applicant should contact UCAS or the chosen university or college for advice.

Applicants who think they may be assessed as a 'home' student (UK or EU) for tuition fees, should apply by **15 January 2011**. However, St. Stephen's students should follow the counselor's deadline, which is late November.

Applicants should be advised to apply in good time wherever possible, but should not be under pressure to apply early at the expense of making careful and considered choices of courses and institutions.

Institutions are expected to give **equal consideration** to all applications received by UCAS up to and including the closing date of 15 January, or 15 October, irrespective of the date of submission. However, it would be unrealistic to guarantee such equal treatment in all cases. Occasionally it may be necessary for admissions tutors to adjust their **admissions policy** in the light of the number and quality of applications received, both of which may fluctuate from year to year. Institutions make every effort to avoid this and to minimize any adverse effects, but they do make admissions decisions before these deadline dates and, generally, start making offers 3-4 weeks after receiving applications.

UCAS applications should be sent to the college counselor by the end of November. Candidates should avoid the 15 January peak when a large volume of applications are likely to cause delays in the processing and acknowledgement of forms.

Applicants who are unable to apply by 15 January may still submit an application. Institutions consider late applicants at their discretion throughout the admissions cycle.

Late applications received by UCAS after 15 January 2011 will be processed as follows:

Applications received between 16 January 2011 and 30 June 2011:

UCAS will forward copies to each institution listed for **consideration at their discretion**. Applications received after 16 January 2011 may not receive a decision until 27 July 2011. Applications received after 24 March 2011 for some Art & Design courses will be considered at the discretion of the institutions and will be accommodated into the interview preference timetable in the most appropriate way.

Applications received between 1 July 2011 and 20 September 2011:

Applications will be processed through the **Clearing scheme**, which operates from mid August. UCAS will send such applicants instructions about Clearing including details of how to obtain vacancy information.

It is in the interests of applicants who are applying late to explain in the application why they are doing so.

League Table of Universities

Every year, *The Times* publishes a ranking of UK universities. This is just one piece of information to use as you select your universities. I caution against putting a great deal of weight on the league tables. Just because University so-and-so is ranked in the top 20 does not mean that it is ranked in the top 20 for your selected subject. Nor does it mean that you will be happy there. Having said that, you can take a look at them by going to <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/education>, where you will be able to use pull down menus to see how various subjects are ranked. Again, look beyond the rankings. Make sure a university that you choose is a place where you believe you will be happy.

CALENDAR FOR UNIVERSITY ENTRY UK 2011²

11th Grade

January - April

- consult reference materials in College Office
- discuss your IB program with IB Coordinator + College Counselor
- consult with teachers in your area of interest about the feasibility of your program choice
- write directly to university admissions tutors for information

² A suggestion to all...Tear out these calendar planning sheets and put them above your desk or somewhere where you will see them often. Refer to them regularly and check off each item as you meet each deadline.

- attend the ECIS U.K. Universities Tour
- give the College Counselor a tentative list of degree programs and university choices

May - August

- obtain university prospectus (if not available in college office) from individual colleges/universities
- visit university campuses over summer vacation
- Potential Oxbridge candidates, Medicine and Veterinary candidates must meet with College Counselor before the end of the school year

12th Grade

September - November

- discuss with the College Counselor your final choices (maximum 5)
- attend group meeting on how to apply online
- apply online using St. Stephen's buzzword
- complete UCAS application on-line as soon as possible but no later than **Oct 1** for applications which include Oxford/Cambridge and **November 24** for all other applications³

November - March

- receive conditional offers from universities
- prepare yourself for interviews if required
- concentrate on your studies in order to satisfy your conditional offers

April - May

- decide on which offers to accept.
- consult prospectuses, speak with SSS graduates attending university in the UK, consult with your IB teachers, get advice from your parents and College Counselor
- attend the ECIS U.K. Universities Tour to speak with admissions officer if necessary

³ UCAS applications are officially due in the 2010-2011 academic year on January 15, 2011. However, for the College Office to manage all applications –U.S., UK and Italy --, students are advised to submit their applications by the Thanksgiving break.

notify UCAS of your acceptance of two offers (you may hold one Firm offer and one Insurance offer)

continue to concentrate on your studies !!!

supply IB coordinator with name of university you plan on attending **and fill out appropriate IB request form for sending your results to the university of your choice**

June - August

await your IB results

make sure that universities have your summer address for important communications about housing, orientation programs, etc.

leave instructions with College Counselor about action to be taken if your offer is not satisfied

if you do not make your offer, you should telephone the university immediately to plead your case. **Do not have your parents call. Universities prefer to deal directly with you.** If you need assistance, contact St. Stephen's and the College Counselor will assist you.

September/October

notify your College Counselor about your final university plans and leave a forwarding address

make sure you have returned materials borrowed from College Office

ALL ABOUT TESTING



Admissions Testing

U.S. COLLEGE ADMISSIONS TESTING INFORMATION

WHAT IS THE PSAT?

The PSAT is a practice SAT. Most students take it in October of their junior year, but some take it in their sophomore year as well. PSAT scores are not shown to colleges, but they give students an idea of how well they'll do on the SAT. And the scores are used to qualify U.S. students for the National Merit Scholarships.

The PSAT has three sections-math, critical reading, and writing skills. Each is scored on a scale of 20 to 80. The math, critical reading, and writing scores multiplied by 10 are roughly equivalent to SAT scores. So a 56 in math on the PSAT is comparable to a 560 on the SAT.

National Merit Scholarship eligibility is determined by adding the math, critical reading, and writing-skills scores. Students, who are U.S. citizens and score above a certain level, depending on their state's index, will be recognized by National Merit. Only a very small percentage of students qualify, however. For most students, the PSAT is simply a practice test.

WHAT IS THE SAT I?

The SAT I takes just over 3 1/2 hours to complete, is given seven times a year, and is used by most colleges and universities as one of the most important factors in their admissions decisions.

It is composed of a math section, critical reading, and writing section. Students receive three scores- one for math, one for critical reading, and one for writing- between 200 and 800, but most schools look at the combined total.

Most students take the SAT I for the first time at the end of their junior year; many take it a second time at the beginning of their senior year. While you can take the SAT as many times as you like, it is a good idea to prepare yourself by doing some practice and/or taking a prep course. Most students take the SAT I two (I suggest a maximum three) times because, generally, skills and scores improve with practice. **Students in the past have changed their mind about universities as late as after finishing the second year of study in the UK or Italy. It is for this reason that St. Stephen's asks all students to take the SAT I at least once.**

HOW IMPORTANT IS THE SAT?

Every school has its own admissions policy, but the general rule is the larger the school, the more important your SAT and your grade-point average. Most smaller schools consider your SAT score but place significant weight on the level of difficulty of your high school classes and on your personal background.

WHAT ARE THE SAT SUBJECT TESTS?

There are SAT Subject Tests for a number of subjects, such as math (IC and IIC), history, biology, chemistry, physics, French, German, Italian and Spanish, each lasting an hour. You can take as many as three in a day, and they are scored on a 200-to-800 scale. Please note that the *listening tests with languages are only offered in November.*

The SAT Subject Tests are becoming increasingly important in college admissions, as they reflect more advanced work in particular areas. Almost all the more selective schools and the entire University of California system require

two SAT Subject Tests. Even if you submit an ACT score, you will often be required to submit SAT Subject Tests. To be safe, check with the school.

WHEN SHOULD YOU TAKE THE SAT Subject Tests?

The best time to take the SAT Subject Tests is when you feel most prepared but no later than the beginning of your senior year. For instance, the best time to take the World History SAT Subject Test is just after a course in World History.

WHAT IS THE ACT?

The ACT has traditionally been favored by Midwestern schools, while the SAT has been more popular on the East and West coasts. But every school these days will accept an ACT score in lieu of an SAT score.

The ACT contains four sections-English, reading, math and science. Each of these sections is scored on a scale of 1 to 36, and the composite score is the average of these four scores.

Whether you should take the SAT or the ACT really depends on which of the tests you think you can score better on. The best approach is to try both of them. And if you score significantly higher on one, submit that test as part of your admissions portfolio.

REGISTRATION AND FEES

Registering is rather straightforward and is explained to students in small groups with the college counselor during junior year. Announcements will be made regularly during morning meetings. For the SAT, you may register by mail, phone (if you have registered previously) or on line. For the ACT, you may only register by mail and online.

Applications for both tests are available in the College Counselor's office. It is best to register early as it gives you the best chance of being assigned to the test center of your choice.

Both the SAT and ACT have registrations closer to the test date but only students taking the SAT can register late. If you register late, the SAT allows students to take the test as a *Standby*. However, there is no guarantee. There is an additional charge for this service above and beyond the charge for late registration.

The bulletins will contain all the instructions necessary to complete the application accurately. Retain the bulletin for the current year after you have completed the registration form because it contains valuable information about procedures, registration, cancellation procedures and other services.

- There are several ways to register for the SAT or ACT. You can pick up a registration booklet at St. Stephen's or call ETS (609-921-9000) or ACT (319-337-1000) and have one sent to you. You can also register online for the SAT at www.collegeboard.org or the ACT at www.act.org (this is what I suggest).
- The fee for the SAT 2009-2010 year is \$43.00. There is an additional \$25.00 international processing fee. The SAT Subject tests cost \$20.00 for basic registration, with the \$25.00 international processing fee, \$20.00 for language tests with listening, and \$8.00 for all other subject tests taken. Consult <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/calenefees/fees.html> for updated fee information. For the ACT, the fee is \$30.00, plus \$14.50 for optional writing section (\$22 additional for international testers). In certain cases, these fees may be waived.

To apply for a fee waiver, go on the act.org or the collegeboard.com websites for the forms.

- Be sure to spell your name the same way each time you fill out a registration bulletin. Different spellings will create different test records and may prevent all your scores from being sent to the colleges to which you apply.
- St. Stephen's School high school code is 748600. If you are registering for the SAT, you must go to The American Overseas School to take the exam.
- Each time you register for a test, you will use a separate form, unless you choose to reregister by phone. Please note that you use the same form to register for both the SAT I and SAT II. Learn your social security number. It will be necessary to supply it each time you register. When registering for subject tests, you will be asked to register for the specific tests you intend to take. The amount of the fee will change slightly depending upon whether you take one, two, or three tests. If, however, you change your mind as to which test you want to take, or desire to take an additional test, you may do so at the same time you take the test without contacting the College Board. They will learn of your decision when they get your answer sheet and bill you directly if you have incurred any additional fees.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

For test takers with special needs, special accommodations are available. A diagnosed condition or disability can entitle the student to extra time, extra breaks or food, a cassette recording or Braille version of the test and other exceptions to standard rules. To apply for special accommodations, send in a request form (get it from your high school counselor) along with letters from a doctor and your school. *This is something you will need to have on file months in advance of the test. Please see the counselor if you need help getting students with special needs approved for special accommodations.*

TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) and TWE (Test of Written English)

The TOEFL test is primarily intended to evaluate the English proficiency of non-native speakers who wish to study in colleges in English speaking countries. The test is divided into three sections: Listening Comprehension, Structure and Written Expression and Reading Comprehension. The TWE is the essay component of the TOEFL. It is a multiple-choice test used to evaluate the English proficiency of applicants whose native language is not English. The test will provide information about the ability of the test taker to generate and organize ideas on paper, to support these ideas with evidence and examples and to use the conventions of standard written English.

If you are a full IB diploma candidate, many universities will accept a letter from the International Baccalaureate Organization exempting students from the TOEFL test. This will save you the \$155.00 test fee. However, some universities will still insist that IB students who are not native English speakers should take this test. Check with the universities you are interested in. If you are unsure as to whether you should take the test, see your counselor for a recommendation.

The TOEFL test is computer based and one can schedule a test date at any time. Registration for the test can be done at www.toefl.org. Test sites are available throughout Italy.

PREP COURSES FOR COLLEGE TESTING

There is no simple answer to this question. At present, the College Board maintains that short courses (20 hours) improve an average combined score by about 25 points. Longer courses (35-50 hours) improve combined scores an average of 35-50 points. There is a word of caution and that is that the improvement can be accounted for as a result of test familiarity. Secondly, many students do additional preparation on their own. Finally, keep in mind that they are just averages and while some scores go up, others go down.

At St. Stephen's, we have no official position on the advisability of taking a coaching course. We encourage students to take practice tests and learn what they can about test taking strategy from them. In the end, we encourage all families and students to choose the preparation option that works best for them. In addition to formal courses, there is software and there are on-line courses.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT COLLEGE TEST SCORES

How do I get my scores sent to the colleges and universities to which I am applying?

When you register for the SAT I, SAT Subject Tests, ACT, or the TOEFL, you are asked to list the colleges to which you want your scores sent. After your test has been scored, the results will be sent by the test giver to these colleges. If you did not indicate any college on the registration form or want to add any additional colleges, you may complete "The Additional Report Request Form" or contact the test giver by phone. Although your test scores appear on your transcript, colleges require and will only use data supplied by an official report. It is the student's responsibility to have the College Board or ACT send this official report to admission offices.

If I take the SAT I or SAT Subject Tests more than once, which scores do the colleges use?

As of spring 2009, the SAT has changed its policy back to "score choice." This means that students will be able to choose which sitting (test date) to send to colleges. According to the College Board, "Score Choice is optional, and if students choose not to use it, all scores will be sent automatically. The new score-reporting feature will launch in spring 2009, and will be first available to students in the class of 2010 participating in the March 2009 test administration.... Colleges will continue to set their own test requirement policies. These policies may vary from college to college. The College Board will work with colleges to provide them with best practice information and guidance on how best to formulate, clarify, and/or communicate test requirements policies, given the new SAT score report policy. Students will be encouraged to follow the different score-reporting requirements of each college to which they apply" (<http://professionals.collegeboard.com/testing/sat-reasoning/scores/policy>).

Can I cancel my score?

You may cancel your test immediately after you have taken it if you feel that you have done poorly. You do this by completing a cancellation form at the test center, or by writing or phoning the College Board or the ACT immediately after the test date (the following Monday). **You cannot cancel your scores once they have been recorded.**

Is any one of my scores more important than another?

Most college admissions officers probably feel the critical reading and writing scores are somewhat more important as predictors of success in college work due to the large amounts of reading and writing that are required in most college curriculum. If, however, you are applying to programs that place a higher significance on math or science, then these scores will be of greater significance.

What if I apply early? When should I take my SAT Subject Tests?

If you are considering applying during the first round of early decision or early action (November 1st or 15th), and subject tests are required, you should take two subject tests by the end of your junior year or plan on taking them during the October SAT test date. If you wait until later than October to complete your subject testing, your scores may not be received early enough to be considered in the early decision/action process. In fact, your application may be judged incomplete and may not be considered at this point. If you are planning on applying during one of the later rounds of early decision (December 15 or January 15), you may take your subject tests as late as the November test date.

Please remember that the best time to take a subject test is immediately after you have completed the relevant course work. If you have not recently studied a particular subject, you will want to review before taking the test. If you have a question about when to take various tests, ask the college counselor.

SUGGESTED TIME TABLE FOR COLLEGE TESTING

Junior Year

October	PSAT	
May/June	SAT I (on either date or both)	
April/June	ACT (on either date or both)	
May	TOEFL	
June	SAT II Subject Tests:	
	US History	Chemistry
	World History	Math I/IIC
	German	English Literature
	Modern Hebrew	French
	Latin	Biology
	Spanish	Physics

Senior Year

October	SAT I (Optional) SAT II Tests (Optional) ACT (Optional) TOEFL (Optional)		
November	SAT I (Optional) SAT II Subject Tests:	French Listening German Listening Spanish Listening	Chinese Japanese Korean
December	SAT I or II (Optional) ACT (Optional) SAT II: Italian, French, Latin, Spanish		
January	SAT I or II (Optional)		
February	ACT (Optional)		

Meet with the College Counselor to decide on a testing schedule for you

TEN TEST TAKING TIPS

1. Before the test, **learn the directions** for each section so you won't have to waste time with the directions during the test.
2. **Read each question thoroughly and carefully** so you understand specifically what is being asked.
3. **Always answer the easy questions first.** Remember, they are usually at the beginning of each section and count the same as the more difficult questions.
4. **Be accurate in marking your answers.** Erase all unintended marks completely. If you skip a question, make sure that your answer choice is for the correct question
5. **It is appropriate to guess** if you can eliminate one or more of the answer choices as being incorrect. Otherwise, leave it blank.
6. **Remember to bring the following to the test center:** Picture I.D, Admission Ticket, No 2 pencil with eraser and a wristwatch.
7. **Get plenty of sleep the night before the test.**
8. **Prepare in advance** Use a computer program, take a practice test.
9. **Arrive at the test location early**
10. **Be confident!** You can do it!

GETTING THERE

All students who are registered to take the SAT I/Subject Tests take them at AOSR (American Overseas School of Rome), Via Cassia 811. Students should arrive by 7:45 a.m. The school is on the left hand side of the Cassia (direction leaving Rome). If you are coming on the Raccordo Anulare, it is two kilometers inside the Raccordo (towards Rome centro).

If you plan on taking public transportation, make sure to allow enough time to get there (at least one hour from school). You can take Tram 225 at Piazzale Flaminio (Metro stop on line A) to Piazza Mancini (end of the tram line) where there are two buses (301 or 201) which head to the Cassia and pass by AOSR. You can also take bus 2/ but you must change to 201 or 301 at Via dei Due Pini (stoplight on Via Cassia).

ALL STUDENTS MUST BRING TO THE EXAM CENTER:

1. Two No. 2 pencils
2. Your admission ticket
3. An acceptable identification with your photo (passport, driver's license, etc.)
4. A calculator (for SAT I and Math subject tests with calculator)

WRITTEN COMPONENTS OF THE APPLICATION



ESSAYS: MAKE YOUR ESSAY COUNT

How important is the personal essay in college admission? What do colleges look for?

First of all, the essay is important- to you and the college. This is your chance to “talk” directly to college admission officers. According to one admissions director, “It makes the facts in the student’s application come alive for us. Because it is the student’s personal statement, no single piece of admission evidence gets as much attention and provokes as much discussion.”

The essay is your opportunity to take charge of the information the college receives about you, and to provide information that does not appear in grades, test scores, and other materials. It allows you to reveal your intelligence, talent, sense of humor, enthusiasm, maturity, creativity, expressiveness, sincerity, and writing ability- traits that count in the admission evaluation. With the UK personal statement in particular, it is your chance to let them know why you have chosen your course of study and why you believe yourself to be a strong candidate.

What do colleges look for?

Generally speaking, the admission staff will evaluate your application on three levels:

Level 1: Your ability to use standard written English that is correctly written, punctuated, with correct grammar, usage, and syntax.

Level 2: Content, substance, and depth of insight, reflecting your ability to think about yourself and to convey your true feelings or opinions about a topic.

Level 3: Creativity and originality. “It is at this level,” according to a dean of administration, “that students can position themselves as unique- as individuals who would bring a freshness of vision and viewpoint to the college that will enhance the quality of its academic and social life.”

In its essay directions, a U.S. college may ask you to do one or more of the following:

- Describe your uniqueness as a person, or tell something about yourself that can’t be learned from the information in your application.
- Discuss something that contributed significantly to your growth.
- Comment on your goals and aspirations and tell how you expect the college to help meet them.
- Write about someone who has had a great influence on you.
- Describe a significant event or experience in your life.

Whatever the topic, the care and attention you give it express the level of your motivation and how much you care about college.

U.S. COLLEGE ESSAY- WRITING TIPS

Here are a few tips for developing an essay that conveys your personal qualities.

1. Don't put off the writing of your essay until the last minute. Write rough drafts of your essays during the summer before your senior year. Allow yourself enough time for all the steps below. U.S colleges may require an individual essay for each college.
2. Be sure you understand the college's topics, directions, and deadlines, and look in its catalog or guidebooks for descriptions of the personal qualities it is looking for.
3. Before you start your essay, jot down your aspirations and how you think the college will help you meet them. Then develop a personal inventory. Make lists of your civic and school activities, your travels, awards, honors, other accomplishments, work experiences, any academic or personal shortcomings you are trying to overcome, and the personality traits you value about yourself. To focus your essay, develop a one-sentence theme from your inventory.
4. Think about the form you might use to convey your information. Straight prose is fine, but if your theme lends itself to another approach, try it.
5. Now write a draft. Set the draft aside for 24 hours, then read it to spot cliches, triteness, vagueness, dullness, grammatical errors, and misspellings. Is your essay focused on your theme, or does it ramble? Is it confusing or boring? Does the introduction "grab" the reader?
6. Rewrite your essay based on this evaluation and repeat step 5 as often as necessary to sharpen your essay.
7. Ask someone whose opinions you respect to read your essay and give his or her candid impressions. Ask for specifics: *Tell me what you think I'm trying to say. How do I come across as a person? Where do you need more details? What parts bore you? Tell me the parts you like the best.* But do not let this person rewrite your essay.
8. If necessary, go back to step 3, 4, or 5. If this draft is the best you can do, polish it by checking again for spelling and grammatical errors, awkward phrasing, inaccurate usage, unnecessary words, or anything else that does not sound right to you. Read your essay out loud to locate the rough spots.
9. Type your essay- unless the college requires a handwritten version- and proofread it to catch typographical errors and any other errors you may have missed.
10. Mail your essay with your application on time and relax. If you have done all of the above, you can be relatively sure your efforts will be noted with appreciation.

UK UNIVERSITY PERSONAL STATEMENT - WRITING TIPS

Personal Statement:

- 54 lines and 560 words in Times New Roman size 12 font
- Straightforward/direct
- Needs to make an impact on the admissions tutor

Objectives:

- Why have you chosen this particular course of study?
- Why are you interested in this subject area?
- Cite a relevant job experience – especially that which relates to your subject area
- Cite key skills/talents i.e. Internship, or strengths in your subject area
- Cite activities that relate to your subject area – i.e. MUN for International Relations
- Cite awards, achievements, honors
- Describe particular or specific interests in a course of study (Extended Essay topic?)
- State future plans and/or goals based on course of study as preparation for same
- State if and explain why you plan to defer for a year before pursuing university
- Why have you chosen to study in the United Kingdom? (Perhaps the degree or qualification from that university system will enable you to pursue your goal.

Format and Structure of Personal Statement:

- Topic sentence/central idea
 - a) Each paragraph must be built around a controlling idea
 - b) Points you make must support this opening idea
 - c) Concise, yet detailed, supporting statement
 - d) Persuasive tone, but always HONEST. Write with candor about yourself
- Organize your statement in a logical, chronological sequence
- State how you have “gone that extra mile” to pursue your subject area
- Show how you are committed to this subject area
- How are you prepared for the challenge of higher education?
- What do you hope to do with the qualification you will receive from this university?

Obtaining Teacher and Counselor Recommendations

(Note: U.K. COLLEGES REQUIRE ONLY THE COUNSELOR RECOMMENDATION)

What you should know about Recommendations

1. Recommendations are not used by public universities except for unusual circumstances (e.g. serious illness, special talent in the fine arts curriculum, foreign born)
2. In many instances, the counselor recommendation (which often includes teacher comments) is sufficient. It is of utmost importance that you give your counselor information in writing regarding your autobiographical information, special interests and activities.
3. Highly selective U.S. colleges will require recommendations from teachers as well as counselors. The most helpful recommendations provide descriptions of your skills and work in the classroom, your comparative ability to other students, along with examples and anecdotes illustrating those skills and personal qualities. You are strongly encouraged to discuss these with your teachers and counselor.
4. A recommendation will have more credibility if you have signed (when provided) the waiver of right to see the recommendation.

Recommendation Procedures

1. Ask the teacher for a recommendation in person (preferably 11th or 12th grade teacher). Be sure to give the teacher plenty of time to complete the recommendation (Note: most U.S. applications are sent at the beginning of Christmas break and the College Counselor should have all recommendations completed by early December)
2. Supply information about yourself. Make a photocopy of your completed CV/autobiography. Give one to each person you ask to recommend you.
3. **Give your teacher the teacher form (see Commonapp for example): The top of the form must be completed (ready for mailing) before you give it to the teacher. Fill in the school address, sign the form, etc.**
4. Ask the teacher to return one copy and one original to the College Counselor. The College Counselor will keep a copy on file for future reference.
5. Wait two weeks. Confirm with the teacher the date the form was given to the College Counselor.
6. Follow up with a personal "thank you" to the teacher or counselor.

What Does a Recommendation Say About You

Below are some characteristics, talents or behaviors that a teacher might mention in the recommendation:

Participation in class discussion
Independent thinking and study
Personal responsibility and organization
Leadership ability
Motivation in school work projects
Self Confidence / Maturity
Consideration for others

Academic ability
Written expression
Imagination or creativity
Academic/Scholarly potential
Critical thinking
Consistent academic performance
Other personal qualities

FINANCIAL AID



Financing an Education in the U.S.: How Much Does a College Education Cost?

Many people overestimate the cost of college or believe that all schools are expensive. For example, a recent Gallup survey indicated that 13-to 21-year-olds overestimated the average cost of public two-and four-year colleges by more than three times the actual figure. The same group estimated that the costs of private four-year colleges were one-third higher than they actually were.

Although some colleges are expensive, costs vary from institution to institution. In addition, the availability of financial aid -- money available from various sources to help students pay for college -- can make even an expensive college affordable for a qualified student.

College Costs

The basic costs of college are tuition, fees, and other expenses:

Tuition

Tuition is the amount of money that colleges charge for instruction and for the use of some facilities, such as libraries. Tuition can range from a few hundred dollars per year to more than \$40,000, not including room and board. The least costly option for post-secondary education is typically a local community college where the average tuition and fees are generally under \$2,500 per year. There are also many four-year colleges and universities that are relatively inexpensive. For example, Chart 4 shows that a little less than half of the students who attend four-year colleges go to institutions that charge less than \$7,000 in tuition and fees. This occurs because about 68 percent of students who attend four-year colleges attend public institutions whose tuitions are much lower than those of private institutions.

Fees

Fees are charges (usually small) that cover costs generally not associated with the student's course load, such as costs of some athletic activities, student activities, clubs, and special events.

Other Expenses

Besides tuition and fees, students at most colleges and universities pay for room, board, books, supplies, transportation, and other miscellaneous costs. "Room and board" refers to the cost of housing and food.

Tuition at Public and Private Colleges

It is important to know the difference between public and private institutions. A school's private or public status has a lot to do with its tuition.

Public Institutions

Over three-quarters of all students in two-and four-year colleges attend State or other public colleges. Since these schools receive a large proportion of their budgets from State or local government, they can charge students who live in that State (in-State students) relatively low tuition. Students from other States (out-of-state students) usually pay higher tuition.

Private Institutions

Private (sometimes called "independent") institutions charge the same tuition for both in-State and out-of-state students. Private college tuitions tend to be higher than those of public colleges because private schools receive less financial support from States and local governments. Most private colleges are "non-profit." Other private post-secondary schools -- mostly vocational and trade schools -- are "proprietary." Such institutions are legally permitted to make a profit.

Financial Aid

Financial aid can help many families meet college costs. Every year millions of students apply for and receive financial aid. In fact, almost one-half of all students who go on for more education after high school receive financial aid of some kind. There are three main types of financial assistance available to qualified students at the college level:

Grants and Scholarships, Loans, and Work-Study.

Grants and Scholarships

Grants and scholarships provide aid that does not have to be repaid. However, some require that recipients maintain certain grade levels or take certain courses.

Loans

Loans are another type of financial aid and are available to both students and parents. Like a car loan or a mortgage for a house, an education loan must eventually be repaid. Often, payments do not begin until the student finishes school, and the interest rate on education loans is commonly lower than for other types of loans. For students with no established credit record, it is usually easier to get student loans than other kinds of loans.

There are many different kinds of education loans. Before taking out any loan, be sure to ask the following kinds of questions:

- *What are the exact provisions of the loan?*
- *What is the interest rate?*
- *Exactly how much has to be paid in interest?*
- *What will the monthly payments be?*
- *When will the monthly payments begin?*
- *How long will the monthly payments last?*
- *What happens if you miss one of the monthly payments?*
- *Is there a grace period for paying back the loan?*

In all cases, a loan taken to pay for a college education must be repaid, whether or not a student finishes school or gets a job after graduation. Failure to repay a student loan can ruin a person's credit rating and make finances much more difficult in the future. This is an important reason to consider a college's graduation and job placement rates when you help your child choose a school.

Work-Study Programs

Many students work during the summer and/or part time during the school year to help pay for college. Although many obtain jobs on their own, many colleges also offer work-study programs to their students. A work-study job is often part of a student's financial aid package. The jobs are usually on campus and the money earned is used to pay for

tuition or other college charges. The types of financial aid discussed above can be merit-based, need-based, or a combination of merit-based and need-based.

Merit-based Financial Aid

Merit-based assistance, usually in the form of scholarships or grants, is given to students who meet requirements not related to financial needs. For example, a merit scholarship may be given to a student who has done well in high school or one who displays artistic or athletic talent. Most merit-based aid is awarded on the basis of academic performance or potential.

Need-based Financial Aid

Need-based means that the amount of aid a student can receive depends on the cost of the college and on his or her family's ability to pay these costs. Most financial aid is need-based and is available to qualified students.

HELPFUL MISCELLANY



Regarding Summer Activities

- Interesting summer experiences alone are not going to get you admitted. But, for a student otherwise qualified in a competitive situation, they can make a real difference.
- Private institutions generally give more weight to summer activities than do public schools, but doing nothing in a summer is a bad plan wherever you apply.
- In terms of how colleges rate the value of summer activity - 1) unique experiences like an internship that the student shapes from a particular interest or cause; 2) non-academic summer programs, such as a summer job; 3) an academic enrichment program; 4) travel/study programs.
- Admission officials understand that not everyone has the money or circumstance to do programs outside their community, so they give equal consideration to local jobs or internships. They will scrutinize carefully what a student with advantages does with his/her summers.
- There are no extra points for participating in an organized program, per se. The question is whether you stretched and reached beyond your bounds. Was there initiative to get involved with something you're really interested in? The more that summer activities reflect your interests and possible career directions, the better.
- If you participate in an organized program, don't assume the college knows all about it. Give them enough info so they understand the nature of the experience. Tell them if you received a scholarship for the program. It helps if it was a selective experience and you competed with others for admission.

Campus Visit Log

(Copy as needed)

College _____
Admission Director _____

Visit Date _____

Academic:

1. How do students describe the academic environment?
2. How much pressure do students feel to compete with each other?
3. What opportunities exist for students to expand upon material studied in the classroom? (i.e. lecture at other colleges, internships, research)
4. How accessible is the faculty? To what extent do first-year students interact with faculty outside of class?
5. Did you attend a class? If yes, what was it like?
6. To what extent is a range of opinion valued? Do students at either end of the spectrum feel compelled to withhold their views?

Social

1. Do students seem to be friendly? What do you observe as you walk around campus?
2. Is there a "typical" student here? If so, how would you describe him or her?

3. Is there a dominant focus to the social life?:
- Saturday discussions of nuclear physics experiments
 - parties begin at noon on Thursday
 - concerts, lectures, dances, etc. are scheduled and are well attended
 - students are serious about academics but also take time to enjoy life
4. How diverse is the student body?

Campus life

5. How are the campus facilities? Are the buildings well-maintained? Does the campus reflect a commitment to academic excellence?
6. Are there adequate support facilities such as computer labs, up-to-date science labs, library, art studio, music practice rooms and athletic facilities
7. What residential options are available to first year students? To upper class students?
8. What restrictions are there, if any, in student residences?
9. Are residence halls networked?

General

10. What did you like best about this college?
11. What did you like least?

SOME USEFUL WEB SITES FOR APPLICANTS

ACT Registration

- www.act.org

Canadian Universities

- www.aucc.ca/en/index.html Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada Web site. This is your single stop for complete, up-to-date information on Canadian higher education
- www.pas.bc.ca Twenty of BC's universities, university colleges, colleges, and institutions are now accepting applications through Canada's first Internet application-for-admission service.
- www.uwaterloo.ca/canu/index.html Links to many if not all Canadian higher education institutions.
- www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/hrib/learnlit/cslp/common/index.shtml Canadian student loans program. For Canadian citizens only.
- www.macleans.ca/xta-doc/2000/11/20/Universities2000/index.shtml US News and World reports on rankings of US schools. Macleans offers rankings on Canada's Universities. Check out this site to see how each is ranked and to find out how rankings were compiled.
- <http://schoolfinder.com> You will find information on over 700 universities, colleges and career colleges, including admission requirements, costs, programs and contact details. You can view interactive virtual campus *e-Tours™*. Find career and scholarship information. Search by program, school, or use the advanced search engine.

Choosing a subject/Selecting a Major

- <http://www.luc.edu/career/majors.shtml> Need some help understanding what career opportunities you will have with various majors? Ever wonder what you can actually do with the major you've already chosen? Take a look at What Can I Do With This Major/Degree. Each title outlines common career areas, typical employers, and strategies designed to maximize career opportunities upon completion of a four-year degree.

Gap Year

- www.frontierprojects.ac.uk This organization places students in field/research projects that contribute to the conservation of natural resources
- www.worldchallenge.co.uk A comprehensive provider of international leadership, teamwork and personal development training for young people
- www.kibbutz.org.il For students who want to experience living on a kibbutz in Israel
- www.projecttrust.org.uk Organizes volunteer work in 24 countries for students taking a gap year.
- www.idealists.org 25,000 nonprofit and community organizations in 153 countries, which you can [search](#) or [browse](#) by name, location or mission.

- www.csv.org.uk Community Service Volunteers is a UK charity that arranges community based work experiences
- www.bunac.org International work and travel programs

International Universities

- www.aaicu.org/index.asp Assoc. of American International Colleges and Universities. Look here if you want to stay in Europe but get a US-accredited degree.
- www.ecis.org Click on Find a University at this site and you can search by country. What you will find are universities here that are members of the European Council of International Schools.
- www.cgf.org This site claims to have the most information about schools all over the world. You can find over 20,000 college catalogs, search by country and get links to universities all over the world. There is a quick start tutorial to help orient you to the site.

Learning Disabilities

- www.skill.org.uk The UK's National Bureau for students with disabilities

SAT Review

- www.testtakers.com Practice tests, questions and strategies
- www.princetonreview.com More practice tests, questions and strategies
- Naviance website – see college counselor for details

UCAS Applications and Study in the UK

- www.ucas.com A centralized admissions center for all UK schools and programs. Here you can search schools, programs and access the UK application. A very user-friendly site and one you will use the most.
- The British Council Website. Click on the information page of interest to you http://www.britishcouncil.org/education/eduinfosh/eduin_index.htm. Quite comprehensive.
- <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/education> Here's where you can find The Good Times University League table information. Some is printed in this guide but at this website, you can see the league table for how each university is ranked by subject.
- <http://www.ceg.org.uk/main.htm> Everything and more that you wanted to know about studying or working in Scotland.

Study Abroad

- www.cgf.com Allows you to search for university programs worldwide
- www.studyabroad.com

Summer Programs

- www.petersons.com

TOEFL

- www.toefl.org Here's where you register to take the test.

U.S. Applications and Guidance

- www.collegeboard.com This is the most comprehensive Web site for U.S. college-bound students and their parents. Find out about everything from standardized tests to financial aid and much more. The College Board also sells excellent test-preparation materials in addition to books and CDs that facilitate the college application process.
- www.petersons.com Peterson's provides information about various U.S. colleges and universities. You can search for a college based on a prospective major. Applications for a number of colleges can be downloaded
- www.collegexpress.com Great information on thousands of colleges, an "ask the expert" area, and plenty of advice on the college
- www.allaboutcollege.com This web site connects you to college web pages. Almost every college web site includes an application which can be downloaded or submitted online. Find the college, click on admissions, and look for application forms as part of the admissions web page.
- www.commonapp.org Where to go to access the common application which is accepted at 300+ colleges
- <http://www.nacac.com/p&s.html> Steps to College is an online newsletter for students and parents produced by the National Association for College Admission Counselors. New stories are added through out the year, but you can search the newsletter for specific topics, such as tips for writing essays, college visits - a planning check list, and financial aid basics
- <http://www.campustours.com> This is exactly what it sounds like: college tours, plus campus maps and web sites.
- <http://www.degreeearch.com> This is a good web site to check out if you know what you want to study, because it will tell you all the schools that have a certain major -- even fairly uncommon ones.
- Naviance – see college counselor for details

U.S. College Rankings

- www.library.uiuc.edu/edx/rankabout.htm The purpose of the rankings site is to draw together and provide context to various online sources of information on the ranking of institutions of higher education. We try to only provide links to stable sites offering original information. These sites rank colleges with criteria ranging from the academic to the spiritual.

U.S. Financial Aid

- www.finaid.org The most complete financial aid site on the internet.
- www.fastweb.com The Internet's largest free scholarship search.
- www.college-scholarships.com This site has put together an online directory of college and university admissions office email addresses and telephone numbers, college scholarship and financial aid office email addresses, and links to the home pages and online applications of more than a thousand colleges and universities. They have assembled a page of links to the very best college and university admissions, college scholarship, and financial aid pages on the web.
- www.edupass.org/finaid There is very little aid available in the U.S. for international students. This site caters to non-U.S. citizens to present more information about financial aid for international students than any other site.
- <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov> On-line registration for the Free Application for Federal

Student Aid along with answers to frequently asked questions about the financial aid process.

GLOSSARY: THE VOCABULARY OF U.S./CANADIAN DEGREES

ACT	American College Test. These are tests in English, math, reading and science reasoning, scored on a scale of 1-36 and accepted by many colleges in lieu of SAT Is and IIs.
AP	Advanced Placement courses/exam. Graded on a scale of 1-5, exam results are sent to the college of the student's choice. The college decides whether or not it will grant credit or placement for AP work in high school; college policies vary widely. These exams are an important part of the admission process for British and other European universities if the student is not doing the full I.B diploma.
Candidate Notification Date	The date colleges notify students of acceptance or rejection (April 15 is the most commonly used date).
Candidate Reply Date	The day by which the student must notify the college of his enrollment intentions, generally, May 1.
CEEB	College Entrance Examination Board. Creates and supervises the SAT I and II. The CEEB code for St. Stephen's is 748600.
Class Rank	The numerical position of a student in his class based on Grade Point Average. SSS does not rank.
College	The term commonly used to describe any institution of higher education. Strictly speaking, it is an institution with a single type of program, such as a four-year course leading to the law degree. A college may be one part of a university (e.g. Yale College is the undergraduate division of Yale University), or it may be independent.
College Board	The organization responsible for the administration of the SATs, APs and the College Scholarship Service.
Common Application (Common App)	A single application which is accepted by over 300 colleges in the U.S.. After completing the original form, the student duplicates it and sends these copies to college choices which accept the common application. It is available at www.commonapp.org and through other web sources.
Core Curriculum	Specified courses required for graduation.
Defer	Students not admitted under Early Action or Early Decision are generally deferred, or put into the regular applicant group to be considered in March.
Early Action / EA	A competitive admissions plan adopted by some U.S. colleges whereby a student can submit applications by an

early deadline (usually November 1) and receive a decision by mid-December. The student is limited to submitting only one Early Action application. Students are not required to notify the college of their enrollment until May 1 and may submit regular applications to other institutions.

Early Decision/ ED

A program whereby a student can apply to his or her first choice college early in the process and receive a response by mid-December. **Upon making an early decision application, the student agrees to enroll if accepted and to immediately withdraw any other applications.**

FAFSA/CSS Profile

Free Application for Federal Student Aid and an additional form often requested. These must be filed no earlier than January 1 of the senior year but as soon thereafter as possible. Most institutions require only the FAFSA, and some require the CSS Profile or an institutional form.

GPA

Grade Point Average.

Ivy League

This term is used to designate a group of eastern colleges with a strong reputation, strictly speaking the ivy colleges are Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard, University of Pennsylvania, Princeton and Yale. It was originally a football conference.

Liberal Arts

The liberal arts (or general) program is the core of most U.S. universities, offering courses in the humanities – the study of literature, languages, philosophy, mathematics and the pure sciences, which should both train and liberate the mind. The liberal arts college offers a four-year course of study, leading to the B.S or B.A degree. Such a course of study usually does not prepare for a specific occupation, though it is often a prerequisite for postgraduate study.

Major

The field of specialization or concentration for a college graduate. The student normally does from a quarter to a third of the total undergraduate work in his or her major field. Often the student is asked to declare a major at the end of the sophomore year.

Minor

Secondary area of concentration, may or may not be required

Rolling Admissions

A system of admissions decision notification whereby a college informs the applicant of his or her status within a short time, generally 6 weeks after the application is complete. In many state university systems, students applying by a priority deadline have a statistically better chance of admission.

SAT I

Scholastic Assessment Test. A test of critical reading, maths, and writing skills with a score range of 200-800.

SAT II	Scholastic Assessment Subject Tests. One-hour exams in 22 subjects on a scale of 200-800. Some universities require them. You must check with each to be sure.
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language. Exam taken by students whose first language isn't English.
Transcript	The official copy of a student's academic record.
Tuition	A fee paid for instruction at a college or university.
UCAS	The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service. The central agency through which you apply for most undergraduate courses and colleges in the UK
University	A public or private institution that grants not only the Bachelor's degree but that has one or more graduate programs as well.

Glossary: The Vocabulary of British Degrees

Single Honors	Study of one subject, within which a range of specialized options may be available.
Joint Honors	Study of two separate but equal subjects, which may or may not be related.
Combined Honors	Study of several subjects, which may or may not be related often narrowing as the course progresses to two or three subjects.
Sandwich Courses	Alternating periods of study with related work experience, normally lasting four years.
Modular Courses	A wide variety of courses is offered, and you select your own program, often after a common subject in the first year. These courses are increasingly taken on a semester basis. They are more frequently offered in the newer universities.
Foundation Year	A pre-degree year during which you take courses to qualify you for a degree program. These would be intended for students who have not achieved IB level qualifications, or whose IB level results did not meet course requirements.
Foundation Year in Art	The year required before acceptance into a degree program in art. A portfolio is required.

HOMework FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS



SUMMER ASSIGNMENT

Writing your essay is good practice for creating the final draft that will be due next fall. The essay or personal statement you create over the summer is only a first draft. I encourage you to develop a number of approaches. Your essay will undergo many revisions before you actually apply to a university/college and as most seniors will tell you, you end up revising it dozens of times. Having said that, your summer assignment is to take a crack at it...

U.S. Applicants

In addition to researching schools that interest you, those applying to the U.S. and U.S.-type colleges should obtain a copy of the Common Application. The common application form is available at www.commonapp.org. You should fill in the relevant information and write a personal statement choosing one of the three topics listed on the form. The common application form is accepted at over 200 colleges. Your sample common application is due upon return to school in September. If you want help on how to write a college essay, go to www.collegeboard.com, click on Getting into College > Creating a Powerful Application > Write a Winning Essay and read the information presented there. You can also go to www.collegexpress.com and click on Admissions Advice > How to Write the Application Essay. There is a *ton* of information on-line if you search in Yahoo! or any browser of your choice.

UK Applicants

If you want help, here is an excellent link (albeit a long one) <http://www.ucas.com/students/startapplication/apply/personalstatement> which tells about how to approach the statement.

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE: QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

There are two goals in completing this questionnaire. One, you need to begin thinking and writing about yourself. Knowing yourself well will help you to choose colleges that suit you. There are also questions that are similar to many that will appear on college applications. Secondly, your responses will help me come to know you better. Please take the time to answer these thoughtfully and thoroughly.

Due to the College Office by January 7th

- Student Questionnaire
- College Counselor letter of recommendation written by you
- Parent Questionnaire

Note: Please **type** your answers on a separate piece of paper and bring them to me.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. **Full Name:**
2. **Email Address:**

YOUR EDUCATION

1. **List all elementary, middle and high schools you have attended, starting with the most recent.**

Name	Location	Dates	Grade
------	----------	-------	-------

2. **What courses have you enjoyed the most in high school? Why?**
3. **What do you choose to learn when you can learn on your own?** Consider interests chosen for research projects and independent study, independent reading, jobs or volunteer work.
4. **Have you worked to your potential in high school?** Have you worked as hard as you could to obtain the best grades that you think you can get?
5. **Are there outside circumstances that have interfered with your academic performance?** Consider after school jobs, home responsibilities or difficulties, changing schools, emotional stress, illness, or any other factors in your recent experience.
6. **Is your academic record an accurate measure of your ability? Why or why not?**

7. **Describe an academic experience which has been a highlight in your years at St. Stephen's. (For example, a particular teacher, a class, a paper you wrote, a project, or a book.)**

GOALS AND VALUES

4. **What aspects of your high school years have you enjoyed the most? What have you enjoyed the least?** If you could live this time over again, would you do anything differently?
5. **If you could change one thing about your high school experience, what would it be?**
6. **What values are important to you? What do you care most about?** What concerns occupy most of your energy, effort and thoughts?
7. **How do you define success?** Are you satisfied with your accomplishments to date? What do you want to accomplish in the years ahead?
8. **What kind of person would you like to become?** Of your talents and strengths, which would you most like to develop? What would you most like to change about yourself?
9. **Is there anything you have ever secretly wanted to do or be?** If you had a year to go anywhere and do whatever you wanted, how would you spend that year? Is there something that you are excited to do or try in the future?
10. **What events or experiences have shaped your growth and way of thinking?** Why? Pick one of these experiences and elaborate on it.

YOUR ACTIVITIES AND INTERESTS

11. **What activities do you enjoy outside the daily routine of school?**
12. **Do your activities show any pattern of commitment, competence, or contribution?**
13. **How would others describe your role in your home or school community? What do you consider your most significant achievement?**
14. **What has been your most important extracurricular activity? How long have you been involved? What do you enjoy about it?**

THE WORLD AROUND YOU

15. **What has been the most controversial issue in your school or community?** How does the issue concern you? How have you been involved in it? What is your opinion about it?
16. **What viewpoints have challenged you most? How did you respond?**
17. **Do you have a hero/heroine? Who? Why?**

YOUR PERSONALITY AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS

18. **College and universities often ask for three adjectives that come to mind to describe a student. What words do you think best describe you? Expand a little on the adjectives and tell us how these qualities will make you a stronger candidate for college.**
19. **Describe your group in school.** With what kind of people do you associate and whom do you admire?
20. **How do you respond to pressure, competition or challenge?**
21. **How do you feel about choices and making decisions yourself?** What are the best decisions you have made recently? How much do you rely on direction, advice or guidance from others? Have you ever chosen anything because it was new or interesting?
22. **How have you spent your summers in grades 9, 10,11,12? What are your plans for this summer?**
23. **How have you used Rome (how has it been important to you) and other international cities? Be specific, be expansive.**

YOUR COLLEGE PREFERENCE

24. **What do you want to get out of going to a college or university?** What worries you the most?
25. **What degree of academic challenge is best for you?** What balance of study, activities and social life suits you best? How interested are you in the substance of intellectual life: books, ideas, issues and discussion? Do you want an academic program where you must work and think hard, or one where you can make respectable grades without "knocking yourself out"? How important is it for you to

