

Guidance Bulletin 40, 19th March 2018

Summary of the term To discuss new issues and to share good practice there was a meeting of guidance counsellors from the Ecolint Foundation in the centre of Geneva on 02-Feb-18 and from around the world at University College London on 26-Feb-18. On 08-Jan-18 Year 11 heard about the choices for Mathematics in the IBDP/CP and the implications for university entrance. On 24-Jan-18 Bespoke Education gave to Years 11 and 12 a presentation, which was recorded for Nations Voice, on preparing for SAT and ACT. There was talk on 16-Jan-18 to all Year 12 students on the university application process. On 02-Feb-18 there was, in the company of an outside expert, a series of presentations for Year 12 students on writing essays for university applications. A virtual meeting for Year 12 parents on 08-Feb-18 allowed for a range of individual questions about guidance matters to be answered. To help start reflection about future choices, there was a presentation on 08-Feb-18 to Year 10 by Condé Nast College on the many careers in the fashion industry, from designing and modelling to marketing and accounting. Parents of students in Years 9, 10, 11 and 12 were invited on 08-Mar-18 to a lunchtime conversation on the topic of the different levels of Mathematics required for university entrance. During the pedagogical day on 19-Feb-18 a workshop was held by the guidance counsellor for teachers on writing letters of recommendation, assessing predicted grades and providing supporting documentation for university entrance. Admissions staff from twenty universities (ranging from Japan and the UK to Canada and the USA) visited Nations to talk to students about entry requirements and application processes.

Years 12 and 13: Notes from the visit on 05-Mar-18 by the University of British Columbia The university website gives details of transfer credits. These are usually awarded for 6 or 7 at Higher Level in the IB diploma. Some students, especially in Engineering, decide to waive the transfer credits for Physics and Maths in order to secure by repetition as firm a foundation in these subjects for the future as possible. Transfer credits shorten the time needed to complete a degree. This can reduce the overall cost or lessen the amount of work. It is therefore feasible to graduate in three and a half, rather than four, years. The admissions office can be relatively flexible over grades: an offer of a place assumes that roughly the same academic standard as shown on the transcript will be maintained until the end of the IB diploma programme. If a place is offered at the Okanagan campus, rather than the Vancouver campus, that may be because of entry requirements. After the first year at the Okanagan campus, provided the grades are sufficiently strong, a transfer to the Vancouver campus could be sought. The Okanagan campus is smaller than the Vancouver campus and so may feel more comfortable when coming from the intimate surroundings of Campus des Nations. The co-op programme provides work experience to include on a CV/resume. Alongside a degree, such experience is essential for securing a job afterwards. Teaching is conducted through a mixture of big lectures (up to four hundred students in a hall) and seminars (no more than twenty-five students). It is recommended that first year students engage in three or four clubs and societies. This number is manageable and affords a link to the wider university community. Entry to Film Production is highly competitive. A strong portfolio is needed and there are only twenty places available each year. Every student is eligible for a three-year work permit after graduation. For more details about the University of British Columbia go to www.ubc.ca.

Year 12: Notes from the visit to University College London on 26-Feb-18 Established in 1826, UCL is the third oldest institute of higher education in England, but in the world it is relatively new. It was the first university in England to accept women on an equal basis with men. London is home to forty institutes of higher education. This allows for scholarly collaboration and research projects. WCSIL (World Class Study in London), which comprises School of Oriental and African Studies, UCL, King's College London, Imperial and London School of Economics, was set up in 2002. The percentage of international students at WCSIL in 2014/15 stood at 18.6 per cent. In the academic league tables Imperial and UCL are next to Oxford and Cambridge. The Mayor of London believes it important to attract international students to London, hence the website www.studylondon.ac.uk for searching over 10,000 courses. With their combination of quality, experience range and career prospects, there are fourteen London universities in the top 500 in the world. This compares with ten in Paris and seven in Boston. Through 43,500 leading academic staff, a highly developed teaching style has been developed with a focus on independent learning, questioning and developing skills. Nineteen of the top twenty-five European software and IT companies have their headquarters in London. This makes London first for

computer games software. Some 400,000 people are currently working in the creative sector. Careers are changing. New jobs will involve Artificial Intelligence: medicine could become more personalised and social media will need reputation management. Yet engineering should still have a strong human element. Soft skills are imparted by all disciplines. These include communication, empathy and curiosity. At Imperial College the series of Horizons lectures in the first year aims to bring together the different disciplines and explore their common traits. QConsult at Queen Mary University of London emphasises people, rather than Artificial Intelligence, as problem solvers. In all of this what worries new international students starting university in the UK? 61 per cent of counsellors consider it is making friends and avoiding homesickness. Only 33 per cent of UCL students hold to this; instead 43 per cent believe that balancing studies with social life is a concern. It is thus worth looking at the pre-departure briefings on the website of the British Council and getting involved in pre-arrival buddy schemes or other opportunities such as <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/new-students/welcome-to-ucl/articles/countdown>. Prompt arrival in the first term is important so that engagement can be made with the orientation schemes. Settling down may inevitably take some time. The key is to be resilient and to take risks. When applying through UCAS, students should focus in their personal statements on fewer ideas and write about these in detail. This allows for reflective thinking. What admissions staff look for is evidence of independent study skills, self-awareness, motivation, commitment, understanding of the course, aptitude for research, ability to write essays, enthusiasm and time management. Extracurricular activities should be linked to the course. It is best to focus eighty per cent of the personal statement on academic matters and leave the remaining twenty per cent to extracurricular activities. There is no such thing as perfection: sending promptly is preferable to revising endlessly. For more details about UCL see www.ucl.ac.uk.

Year 12: EPFL Summer Schools ‘Nature, en code’ runs from 09 to 12-07-18 and is taught in French and English. It looks at natural selection and genetic mutation. Applications must be made by 15-May-18 at www.gymnases.epfl.ch/summerschool-natureincode. ‘Des atomes aux ordinateurs’ runs from 25-Jun to 06-Jul-18 and offers an introduction to scientific programming and material modelling. Further details, including how to book, can be found at <https://gymnases.epfl.ch/camp-materiaux-2018>.

Years 11 and 12: UK Summer School in Economics Designed for motivated 16-18 year olds wishing to have an inspirational summer, the Warwick Pre-University Summer School engages peers from around the world at its leading Russell Group campus. The academic enhancement programme gives a taste of undergraduate teaching from Warwick faculty and guest speakers. The course ends in London where Warwick has a base. For more details go to www.warwick.ac.uk/preuniversity/summer-school.

Years 11 and 12: Medicine ‘A report in the *British Medical Journal* in 2011 found that a third of doctors [in the UK] have a mental health disorder. A Royal College of Physicians’ survey of junior doctors found last year that 70 per cent worked on a rota that was permanently under-staffed, 80 per cent felt their work put them under excessive stress, and a quarter felt it had a serious impact on their mental health ... The technological and medical advances in medicine are breathtaking ... But this has not been matched by understanding about the psychological load doctors bear ... Conventional wisdom has it that medics cauterise their emotions to protect themselves, but the evidence suggests that in fact suppressing their feelings makes them burn out more quickly ... [M]edical schools have poor systems for identifying candidates whose emotional thermostat may prove all but impossible to adjust, or who simply lack the necessary resilience for the job ... Too many trainee doctors realise too late they’re not cut out for the job. Many simply underestimate the commitment they’ve undertaken.’ ‘Stress test’, *Guardian Magazine*, 10-Mar-18, pp. 22-27 (<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/mar/10/panic-chronic-anxiety-burnout-doctors-breaking-point>).

Years 9, 10, 11 and 12: EPFL Summer Schools ‘Ginger Camps’ consider entrepreneurship and new technologies. There are two dates: 09 to 12-Jul-18 (taught in English or French) and 20 to 24-Aug-18 (taught in French). For more details and to book go to <https://gymnases.epfl.ch/gingercamps>.

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