

Guidance Bulletin 41, 9th April 2018

Year 12 (and Year 11 for reference): Applying to top universities Half a year now remains before the deadlines of 15-Oct (Oxford and Cambridge) and 01-Nov (Early Action/Decision). In that time become the focus of your own application since neither guidance counsellor nor teachers are putting themselves forward for selection. If you are called for interview, practice is given beforehand at school. For inspiration read Constantine Cavafy's poem *Ithaca*; and for practical advice Guidance Bulletins 1, 3, 23, 25, 26, 28, 29 and 32. **Oxford and Cambridge** (1) Cultivate interest in the academic area, but do not mention the word passion in your personal statement. (2) Read round the chosen subject and make brief notes about particular points of interest. (3) Elaborate on ideas to show depth of thought. (4) Think how your interest started, not that you have always held it. (5) Look at university websites for booklists, but read with discernment. (6) While the application is fiercely competitive, with preparation you can be as good as the competition. (7) Ask yourself if you are serious about investing time in the application, for the effort should form part of a personal intellectual journey. (8) Grades are of the essence and you should aim ideally for a total (without ToK) of 40 points in your reports cards. (9) Since no personal statement can be perfect, certainly heed the advice of others, but in the end trust your own style of writing (see below). (10) Prepare past questions using the papers provided on the websites for entry tests such as HAT, MAT, CAT and PAT. (11) Share your interest in the chosen academic area with others so that you can explain it cogently at interview. **Ivy League** (1) Take SAT or ACT and aim for the highest scores. (2) Ensure the grades in the summer term report are the best possible for the transcript. (3) Ponder which essay to write for the Common Application and the supplements. (4) A small theme cleverly crafted (a recipe for a biscuit/cookie) can be just as effective as a big theme (president of STUCO). (5) Make sure that SAT subject tests, if required, are completed to the highest standard. (6) By all means write from an international perspective, but shun stating you are international. (7) Stay true to yourself in order that the self may shine through. (8) Consider too the advice for Oxford and Cambridge.

Year 12: Trust your own writing style 'When my daughter was writing her final essay for her English A-level on the meaning of love, she finally agreed to let me read her final draft as I knew the books in question well. I made what I thought were helpful revisions and helped her to rewrite certain sections in shorter sentences to make her essay more readable. To my surprise – she must have been desperate – she accepted all my suggestions. The draft came back as a fail, with the comment that many of my insights were just plain wrong and that the use of short sentences was a big mistake. She went back to the original text she had written and duly got an A.' (John Crace 'Digested week', *The Guardian* 10-Mar-18, p.33)

Year 12: Interviews at Oxford and Cambridge The interviewers are not looking primarily at *what you know*, but rather at *how you think*. The following videos may be of interest:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=9&v=6kiTAeTvI9M
https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=110&v=dUwN6GI-0EQ
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a7XwKVCBPfM>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=14&v=CXiQtJXTZSo

Years 11 and 12: Cambridge admissions tutors in Geneva Meet two very experienced Cambridge admissions tutors (Churchill College and Pembroke College). The meeting (as signalled already in Guidance Bulletin 36) takes place from 18:30 to 19:30 in the Arts Centre at La Grande Boissière on 12-Apr-18. To register go to <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/university-of-cambridge-information-event-international-school-of-geneva-tickets-44179372693>.

Years 11 and 12: Notes from the visit by Lynn University (FL-USA) on 05-Mar-18 Lynn University has one of the highest concentrations of international students in the USA. The campus is large. Of the 3,000 students, 2,300 are undergraduates, the rest graduates. Typically there are about twenty students in a classroom. This allows for individualised teaching, academic enrichment and career support. Some programmes, for example engineering, require an internship. This can take place over the summer or during a semester. There are many opportunities locally in digital media. Lynn University is the only institute of higher education that is fully integrated with Apple technology. Everything done on campus

is thus paperless. This brings Lynn into the top ten most innovative institutions along with Lehigh, MIT and Wake Forest. The books in the compulsory core curriculum are pre-loaded to the iPad which is given to each new student. The other books for the chosen modules must be bought. Lynn University is divided into six colleges, the most popular of which is Business. Education goes up to Grade 6/Year 7. It is suggested that relevant experience makes students stand out in the job market more than a double major. All US universities are flexible over subject choice. The core curriculum must, however, be covered. While usually this takes the first two years to complete, after which a major is selected, at Lynn University it is integrated from the beginning with the chosen major. This allows students simultaneously to start on what they want to do and to complete what they must do. 'J' term comes after the winter break. This lasts three weeks, helps the local community, and teaches students about the world, civility and offering something to others. April is the busiest month for visits by prospective students to the campus. A visit takes three hours and includes a tour and lunch with a professor in the chosen major. Lynn University does not require SAT or ACT for general entry, but to play in NCAA the scores in SAT (at least 1000) or ACT (at least 24) must be submitted. Ranked forty-fifth, Lynn University is in NCAA Division 2 and wins national championships, particularly in golf, soccer and tennis. Applications for Early Action must be received by 15-Nov. Replies are then given by 15-Dec. The deadline for applications by Regular Decision is 01-Mar. Last year there were 4,000 applications. The admissions process is holistic: it is not just academic matters that count, but also the stories that each student tells. For more information go to www.lynn.edu.

Years 11 and 12: Architecture Training to become an architect in Europe generally takes at least seven years, with a bachelor degree being followed by a masters or professional training. In Geneva a bachelor degree (<http://hepia.hesge.ch/fr/bachelor/departements/construction-et-environnement/architecture/>) can be taken at HEPIA, part of HES-SO (Haute École Spécialisée de Suisse Occidentale) and taught in French. Admission with the IB diploma is based on the usual prerequisites for Swiss universities (32 points without the core and Maths or Physics/Chemistry/Biology at HL – see Guidance Bulletin 33) and must be preceded by a year of practical experience. École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL) runs a bachelor degree in Architecture taught in French: <https://bachelor.epfl.ch/admission>. The entry requirements are 38 points (without core points – see Guidance Bulletin 39). In Ireland Architecture is offered at University College Cork, University College Dublin, Dublin Institute of Technology, Sligo Institute of Technology and Waterford Institute of Technology. Further details about Ireland can be found at www.cao.ie. The entry requirements for University College Cork are at least 34 points in the IB diploma with 4 in SL Maths. In the UK details of institutions offering Architecture can be found at www.ucas.com. Many UK courses require HL Visual Arts (and an accompanying portfolio) for entry, for example University of Nottingham (36 points), University College London (36 points), University of Westminster (32 points) and Anglia Ruskin University (24 points). The Architectural Association School of Architecture (<http://www.aaschool.ac.uk/>) is a private institution in London with an outstanding reputation, which wants a minimum of 24 points, including HL Visual Arts, and a portfolio. The University of Malta offers a bachelor degree in Built Environment Studies taught in English. The entry requirements are 28 points with 5 in HL Maths and the one-year Diploma in Design Foundation Studies. This is a multi-disciplinary qualification designed for bridging European higher education and Architecture/Civil Engineering: <https://www.um.edu.mt/courses/overview/UBSCHBENFT-2017-8-O>. Reading about architectural styles is important, for example in <https://www.architecturaldigest.com>, <https://www.architecture.com> and <https://www.archdaily.com>.

Years 10, 11 and 12: Hospitality Summer Experience Les Roches Summer Experience programmes in Spain, Switzerland, the USA and China afford the opportunity to experience different hospitality sectors such as travel, tourism, events, entertainment and food. Industry managers and enthusiastic teachers aim to transform the way you present yourself, enhance your multicultural skills and give hands-on hospitality experience, including rooms division, front office and kitchen. Discover whether a degree and a career in the hospitality industry are right for you. Applicants must be aged between 15 and 19 years old, hold a valid passport and be in possession of current health insurance. The costs start at €3,000. For details go to <https://www.lesroches.edu/programs/summer-experience/>.

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