

University Application Guide

CONFIDENTLY

- Apply to University
- Register for the SATs
- Apply for Scholarships

CONTENT

3 Introduction to University

- 3 The Benefits of Postsecondary Education
- 3 Undergraduate Degree Types
- 3 Academic Programs

4 Applying to University

- 4 Your Application Strategy
- 5 General Application Deadlines
- 5-6 College Prep Timeline For Grades 9 to 13
- 6 Admission Determinants
- 6 Create An Application Portfolio
- 6 Application Hubs For International Schools
- 7 Seven Ways To Make Your College Essay Stand Out

7 Understanding the SATs (Scholastic Aptitude Test)

- 7 What Is It?
- 8 Registering for the SAT
- 8 Sending In Your Results

8 How to Accept a University Offer

- 8 Intent To Register
- 8-9 Student VISA Applications

9 Paying for University

- 9 Antigua: Ministry of Education Scholarships and Grants
- 9 Antigua and Barbuda National Student Loan Fund
- 10 Student Loans from Local Banks
- 10 Navigating Scholarships and Financial Aid In The Us
- 11 Be A Successful Scholarship Applicant

11 University Affiliations

- 11 University of South Florida
- 11 St. Mary's University (Nova Scotia, Canada)

12 Important Web Links



Introduction to University

The Benefits of Postsecondary Education

Why University?

College is beneficial to everyone and helps provide a solid foundation for a successful future. Here are the top three reasons why you should attend:

1. **Money.** With a postsecondary degree, employers will be inclined to provide a salary that will commensurate with your educational and professional experience. Statistics prove it!
2. **Be an empowered agent in your life.** A college education can provide security and the freedom to choose your career and desired lifestyle.
3. **The transition from teenager to adult.** For many it will be their first time living away from parents and family and taking full responsibility of their life. This will be the time to learn important life skills such as prioritizing and money management.

The International Baccalaureate Diploma

1. **Advanced Standing credits** are college credits earned *before* entering university, either through college-level work or through examination. Advanced standing credit is awarded in most North American colleges for successful IB examinations, usually with a grade of 6 or 7, and sometimes 4 or 5 depending on the school and program. High performances in IB examinations can knock-off up to a full year of university.

Undergraduate Degree Types

USA and Canada

Associate Degree or Associate's Degree (*AA- Associate of Arts or AS- Associate of Science*) are usually earned in two years, often at a community or vocational college and generally require around 60 credits for completion. Students who earn an Associate's Degree sometimes do so to see if the path they have chosen is correct for them. Credits can cost less and may be transferable to a four-year college if the student chooses.

Bachelors Degree (*BA- Bachelor of Arts or BS- Bachelor of Science*) earned in 4-5 years, the ***Bachelors of Arts*** focuses on critical thinking and communication in a wide variety of liberal arts areas, including languages, math, science, social science, and the humanities. Majors may be in subjects such as History, English, Sociology, and Anthropology etc.

Bachelors of Sciences focus on critical thinking with an emphasis on sciences such as technology and medicine. Majors may be in Computer Science, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Economics, and Engineering etc.

Undergraduate Certificate/Professional Degree An undergraduate certificate is a structured set of professionally oriented courses designed to provide recognition that the student has completed coursework in an applied area of focus. For degree-seeking students, a certificate program may either complement or be concurrent with a traditional program of study. *E.g. Certificate in Coaching/ Certificate in Creative Writing/ Certificate in Local History.*

The 2-year diploma or 3- year advanced diploma offers courses that are more technical/vocational, related to training and education for specific careers. Diplomas can usually be used for transfer into a Bachelors program.

UK

Bachelors/Honors Degree is the equivalent to a Bachelors degree in the USA. Programs tend to take around 3 years, sometimes 4, for courses such as medicine and architecture. Students must select their course (major) before applying.

Title variations:

- Bachelor of Science (BSc)
- Bachelor of Education (BEd)
- Bachelor of Law (LLB)
- Bachelor of Engineering (BEng)

Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE) is an intermediate level of qualification, which may be awarded after one

year of undergraduate study.

Diploma in Higher Education (DipHE) is an intermediate level of qualification, which may be awarded after two years of undergraduate study. Both intermediate qualifications can be used for transfer into an honors degree.

Academic Programs

Major – A student's primary field of study (called course in the UK) *E.g. Political Science*

Minor – A student's optional secondary field of study, which usually requires less course hours than a major.

E.g. A major in Communications with a minor in Marketing (available in most US and CA schools- not in the UK).

Concentration - A structured plan of study within a major (available in select institutions).

E.g. A major in Political Science with a concentration in Latin American Politics

Undeclared- Many first-year students begin university without declaring a specific major. Usually an undeclared student will have to at least identify a general discipline. *E.g. Undeclared- Fine Arts (Available only in US and CA).*

Double Major- Two academic majors completed in tandem; while they are often related or complimentary, they can also be unrelated. *E.g. Complimentary- International Relations and Spanish Language; Related- Finance and Mathematics; Unrelated- Music and Political Science.*

Applying to University

Your Application Strategy

There are thousands of colleges, but each student has to find the one best suited to their interests, future goals and financial requirements. In order to narrow your college search, we advise to consider:

- ✓ Campus Size
- ✓ College Location
- ✓ Academics and Courses
- ✓ Student Demography
- ✓ Student Life
- ✓ Housing
- ✓ Extra-Curricular Activities
- ✓ Cost
- ✓ Scholarship and Financial Aid Availability

 **Identify your top priorities and use them to shape your college search.**

 **Check out our list of college search engines on page 12!**

Apply to 2-4 Probable Universities- Student should fit the college's general admissions criteria in both academic and social aspects.

Apply to 1-2 Safety Universities- the admissions requirements are more flexible or the school is less selective (70% or more accepted). The student exceeds the schools admissions requirements and has little chance of rejection, as well as can afford the tuition or has extensive access to scholarships and financial aid.

Apply to 1-2 Reach Universities- these are top schools with highly selective admission rates (less than 30% accepted). Reach schools are usually a challenge for any student, even the best, to gain admission.

General Application Deadlines

USA

- **Early Decision** October 15th to December 1st
- **Regular Decision I (most)** January 1st, 15th and the 31st
- **Regular Decision II (some)** February 1st and the 15th
- **Regular Decision III (Florida)** dates usually fall between March and May

UK

- **General Admission** January 15th
- **Special Admission** October 15th (Medicine, Veterinary Science, Dentistry, Cambridge or Oxford)

Canada

- **General Admission** dates usually fall between January 1st and March 1st



Consult each university website to confirm specific deadlines especially for Canadian and European universities.

College Prep Timeline for Grades 9-13

Grade 9

- Identify your goals, values and interests. This will guide your future academic and career choices.
- Select CXC courses that will support these goals. If you want to be a doctor you should focus on the sciences.

Grade 10

- Be marketable: participate in community service, play with a sports team and/or join the student council. Also maintain good, if not excellent grades. Colleges like well-rounded students.
- Build good student-teacher relationships (remember teachers will have to write recommendations for you).

Grade 11

- Research colleges and select your favourites; we recommend at least five. Research their requirements and make sure you are on track.
- Pick IB courses that fulfill college requirements and that will support you in your chosen major and career.
- Research and identify scholarships, note the requirements and work hard to meet them during your time in IB.
- Begin prepping for the SAT, which you will take in G12.

Grade 12

- Continue to explore the websites of colleges that interest you and make note of the admissions requirements.
- Come up with a preliminary list of schools that include **reach**, **match** and **safety**.
- Register for the May/June SATs.
- Look over the Common App and start thinking about your personal essay topic.
- If possible, visit campuses and interview with college reps.

Grade 13

September-October

- Register for the October or November SAT and continue prepping; take the test when the time arises.
- Meet with your guidance counselor to discuss colleges that you're applying to.
- Create a college application portfolio. You can also create accounts with The Common Application or UCAS.
- Request letters of recommendation.
- Apply for financial aid and scholarships.

November-December

- Register for the December SAT if you think that you will need to retake the test one more time.
- Complete and submit all components of your application before the set deadlines.
- For international students applying to US schools complete the international students financial aid forms for each school and the CSS profile available on collegeboard.com.

January-March

- Continue to focus on your grades, extracurricular activities and study hard for your IB examinations.

April-May

- Patiently wait for decisions to be announced. Keep track of acceptance, waitlist and rejection correspondence.
- Notify all colleges on your decision. State whether you have, or have not accepted their offer.
- When you are certain, accept the offer from the college of your choice. Note the deadlines to send a deposit and confirm your acceptance.
- Begin application for your student visa.

June-August

- Have your final transcripts sent to colleges.
- Keep track of student loans, scholarships or any other means of financing your education.
- Keep up to date with school emails. An admissions representative will help you prepare for your first year: organizing your housing (on or off campus) and registering for your new classes.

Admission Determinants

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Academic GPA*• Application Essay*• Character/Personal Qualities*• Class Rank*• Extracurricular Activities*• Recommendations*• Rigor of Secondary School Record*• Standardized Test Scores- SATs* | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community Service/Volunteer Work• Work Experience• Talents/Abilities• Interview• Geographical Residence• Alumni Relation• First Generation College Student• Racial/Ethnic Status |
|---|---|

(* Indicates key determinants)


Create an Application Portfolio

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Completed Application Form<input type="checkbox"/> Official Transcripts<input type="checkbox"/> IB Predicted Scores<input type="checkbox"/> Standardized/External Test Results<input type="checkbox"/> Recommendation Letters<input type="checkbox"/> Copy of Passport (for student visa application)<input type="checkbox"/> CSS/ Financial Aid Profile (US) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> International Student Financial Form -including bank statement and parent's job letter/loan agreement/scholarship agreement<input type="checkbox"/> Additional materials for specific majors, that is writing samples (for journalism), etc.<input type="checkbox"/> Résumé |
|--|--|

Application Hubs for International Schools


USA

Use the Common Application; it is available for almost 4,000 US universities and colleges. If your school is not a member of the Common App, please visit the school's website and follow its application instructions.

 **You must complete the education section found under the Common App tab in order to invite your school counselor to complete your school report and counselor recommendation. Do this early! Application fees differ by school but usually range between \$25-70 USD per school.**

UK

Apply to all schools using UCAS (Universities and College Admission System).

 **After creating an account you will be prompted to enter your personal statement. Keep in mind that the statement will be sent to all schools you are applying to so avoid mentioning the names of schools or course if they differ by school choice. The cost is £12 pounds for one course or £23 pounds for multiple courses.**

Canada

For schools in Ontario use Ontario Universities' Application Centre (OUAC). Start your application by choosing OUAC 105 from the homepage and then choosing 105 F for international students.

 **For schools outside of Ontario, applications usually differ and can be found on each school's website. Follow all instructions and ensure all components of the application are complete.**

College Essay Writing Tips

- ✓ **Your first paragraph should grab the reader.** For instance, challenge the reader by speaking directly to him/her, or try starting with a question.
- ✓ **Be a real person, not an anonymous author.** Write with your own personality. Honesty, humour, writing the way you speak to show the way you think, all help to create voice.
- ✓ **Don't be boring!**
- ✓ **Make your essay correct and beautiful.** If there are a lot of mistakes in your essay, it cannot be pretty. Make sure you have spelled everything correctly. Make sure your basic punctuation is correct.
- ✓ **Approach the essay from a different angle.** For example, what if you were to take the negative approach to answer the prompt? What are your hopes? Maybe you can tell what your hopes are by writing what you do not hope for.
- ✓ **Be clear and logical!**
- ✓ **Leave your reader with a lasting impression.** End your college essay with something that not only summarizes the most important aspects of you but that is also memorable. Memorable endings are poignant.

USA- Common App Essay Prompts 2014-2015 (word limit 650 words)

The key point of the US Common Application essay is to distinguish yourself as an individual—write about something that will make you stand out—what do you value? What has made you grow as a person? Be introspective. Do not embellish your achievements, rather highlight how you have come to achieve them and life lessons or qualities you have learned or developed along the way. Lastly, keep in mind writing style, grammar and mechanics.

UK- UCAS Personal Statement (word limit approx. 600 words)

Your personal statement should persuade universities and colleges to accept you for their course.

Course tutors will use personal statements to compare applicants, so make yours stand out!

Remember it's the same personal statement for all courses you apply to –so avoid mentioning universities or colleges by name, and if your subjects are varied then write about common themes – like problem solving or creativity.

Canada- The Application Supplement (AS) or Short Essay (word limit 200-500 words)

You are encouraged to focus on listing your extra-curricular activities, distinctions, awards and honors because the AS has a smaller word limit. Some programs hold the application supplement as equal to an academic record. It is to help admissions officers answer:

- What will the candidate add to the university's campus and programs?
- Why is this student interested in pursuing a degree at the institution?
- Will this student be well suited for their chosen field of study?

Understanding the SATs

The **SAT I** (Scholastic Aptitude Test) is a globally recognized college admission test that lets you show colleges what you know and how well you can apply that knowledge. It tests your knowledge of reading, writing and math because the combination of your high school grades and SAT scores is the best predictor of your academic success in college. The **SAT I** is held six times a year during the months of October, November, December, January, May and June.

The **SAT II or Subject Tests** are hour-long, content-based tests that allow you to convey achievements and interests in specific subject areas. There are 20 SAT Subject Tests in five general subject areas: English, History, Languages, Mathematics and Science.

 **Find out if your college requires or recommends taking one or more SAT Subject Tests. Many colleges don't require or recommend them but will still consider the SAT II when reviewing an application.**

 **We do not encourage our students to take the SAT Prep (PSAT) because the scores are not reviewed by colleges and are not indicators of SAT I performance.**

Registering

- The website to register for the SATs: collegeboard.org and will list upcoming SAT dates and their registration deadlines. Your College Board Profile is also where you will see your SAT Test scores. Before you can register College Board will prompt you to complete a college profile. Please review our College Application Process segment (pages 4-6) for assistance with this. Make sure to select **outside of the US** when entering high school information.
- To complete your college profile you will need a digital copy of your passport photo as well as a parent to provide their credit card information; registration fees currently cost \$52.50 USD. Antigua's SAT Test Centre is **Antigua Girl's High School**, located on Upper Newgate Street.

Sending in your SAT Results

Your official score report will be provided to you about five weeks after the test. If you wish to receive a paper score report by mail in addition to the online score report, you must request it when you register.

The initial SAT registration allows you to send these scores to 4 colleges of your choice for FREE. You have up to 9 days after your test date to change your recipients' list. To send your scores to additional institutions, it will cost \$11.25 USD per report.

How to accept a University Offer

Intent to Register

Submit your deposit with intent to register to one university. The **Intent to Register** is a contract with a college promising that you will definitely attend in the upcoming semester. If you have multiple offers, you should choose the college that will afford you the opportunities that fit your future goals and your budget best. If scholarships and financial aid are deciding factors, the acceptance deadline leaves time to assess monies afforded to you and whether or not you can afford to attend the college.

Student Visa Applications

More than likely you will need to apply for a student visa to attend the university/college of your dreams. After accepting your college offer, you should make contact with the school's international admissions office so they can guide you on further paperwork needed to complete your application and legally study in another country.

USA

If you are not American, you must have an F-1 student visa to study in the United States. The nearest American Embassy that can grant you the visa is located in Barbados. For more information please visit their website, which is listed on page 12. An appointment with the American Embassy in Barbados needs to be made in order to apply for the student visa. We advise that you make your appointment as soon as you decide which school you will be attending.

Canada

If you are not Canadian, you must have a study permit to attend a school in their country. Before you can apply for the permit online, you will have to fill out a questionnaire to see if you are eligible. If you are deemed eligible, you will be prompted to pay a \$150 CAD application fee. Once paid, you will be given a step-by-step guide on applying for your study permit. You will need proof of acceptance, identity and financial support as well as a letter of explanation.

UK

You will need a 4 Tier (general) student visa, but you must be accepted by a university, be able to speak and understand English fluently, as well as have the finances to afford tuition. The online application costs £310. A decision on your visa will happen within 3 weeks.

Paying for University

What is a Scholarship?

It is an award of financial aid to a student so they can further their education. Scholarships are awarded based upon various criteria, which usually reflect the values and purposes of the donor or founder of the award. Scholarship money does not need to be repaid.

- **Need-based:** determined by the student's family financial record. Requires applicants to fill out a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to qualify if the scholarship is a federal award. Private need-based scholarships often require the results of a FAFSA, which calculates a student's financial need by analyzing the expected family contribution and cost of attendance at the college.
- **Student-specific:** These are scholarships for which applicants must initially qualify based upon gender, race, religion, family and medical history, or many other student-specific factors. Minority scholarships are the most common awards in this category.
- **Career-specific:** These are scholarships a college or university awards to students who plan to pursue a specific field of study. Often, the most generous scholarships are awarded to students who pursue careers in high-need areas such as education or nursing. Many schools in the United States give future nurses full scholarships to enter the field, especially if the student intends to work in a high-need community.
- **College-specific:** Scholarships that are offered by a college and university to highly qualified applicants. These can be either full-ride or partial scholarships that are given on the basis of academic and personal achievements.
- **Athletic:** Awarded to students who show exceptional skill in a sport provided by the college.

Antigua and Barbuda Ministry of Education Scholarships and Grants

Scholarships awarded by the government are determined by the administration's budget and the national need for the subject pursued. Antigua and Barbuda's priority areas (listed in order) are currently:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Education | 7. Pure and Applied Sciences |
| 2. Tourism | 8. Visual Performing Arts |
| 3. Agriculture and Technology | 9. Forensic Sciences |
| 4. Information Technology | 10. Pharmacy/Pharmacology |
| 5. Financial Services Management | 11. Modern Languages |
| 6. Architecture | |

 6 CXC passes (Grades 1, 2 and 3) are required. The annual deadline is April 30th.

Antigua and Barbuda National Student Loan Fund (NSLF)

NSLF is a program initiated by the government to provide students with the financial support they need to pursue their tertiary education and also to have nationals apply their studies to the economic and social progress of Antigua and Barbuda. The maximum loan amount is \$50,000 ECD, and ONLY undergraduate, graduate, vocational and post-secondary/technical education programs will be considered.

Eligibility:

- You MUST be a citizen of Antigua and Barbuda
- 18+ years of age
- Be accepted by an acceptable institution
- Propose to, or be in pursuit of a fulltime course of study approved by the Student Loan Advisory Committee.

Quick Facts

- The interest rate on the loan is 3% per annum
- All applicants will need two sureties who need to be employed and reside in Antigua and Barbuda
- Students with a full ride scholarship will not be eligible for the NSLF

Student Loans from Local Banks

Some banks in Antigua assist students with their academic pursuits and offer loans to individuals which have been accepted by an educational establishment. Unlike scholarships, student loans need to be repaid with interest. Also, they most likely do not cover 100% of your schooling's financial needs. To be applicable for a student loan, you will most likely need:

- ✓ **A college acceptance letter**
- ✓ **A guarantor/surety who resides in Antigua**
- ✓ **Collateral (something pledged as security for repayment of a loan)**

We encourage you to research which bank best suits your financial needs by making appointments to inquire about each bank's student loan policy, what you will need to be a successful applicant, as well as their timeline to dispersing the funds- this may affect your ability to enroll in school. Below is a list of popular banks that provide student loans:

Scotia Bank

High Street; Tel. 480-1500
Woods Center Branch; Tel. 480-1600
<http://www.antigua.scotiabank.com>

ACB (Antigua Commercial Bank)

Loans Tel. 481-4262
Village Walk; Tel. 481-4150
St. Mary's and St. Thames Streets; Tel. 481-4200

ECAB

(Eastern Caribbean Amalgamated Bank)

info@ecabbank.com
Tel. 480-5300
www.ecabank.com

CIBC First Caribbean

Personal Loans, High and Market St; Tel. 480-5000
Personal Loans, Old Parham Rd; Tel. 480-5007

Navigating Scholarships and Financial Aid in the US

International students are **not** eligible for the US government aid programs, but many schools will ask them to submit a FAFSA so that they may use the data for assessing financial need as part of their application for institutional aid. International students will need a Social Security Number (SSN) to fill out the FAFSA, which will also help them to open a bank account or get an American driver's license. Even though the FAFSA will still be rejected, the data is still there and can be drawn down by the financial aid office and used to make institutional awards. We suggest you contact the schools to which you are applying so that they can guide you thoroughly through the FAFSA application process.

Following this process, a SSN and institutional aid will usually be given to a student after they have begun and paid for their first semester/year at university.



Some scholarships have a "bond" requirement. Recipients may be required to work for a particular employer for a specified period of time or work in rural or remote areas. This is particularly the case with education and nursing scholarships.

Be a Successful Scholarship Applicant

The majority of scholarship deadlines fall between October and April. A paper and electronic scholarship portfolio will help you be organized and to ensure that you meet the scholarships' application requirements.

You portfolio should include:

- ✓ **Résumé** - a listing of your employment and volunteer positions, as well as extracurricular activities, awards, honors and any leadership positions.
- ✓ **Official Transcripts** - order two or three official copies at the beginning of each year or semester

- ✓ **Financial Reports** - bank statements, or any document that shows your financial obligations or needs.
- ✓ **Identification** – your birth certificate and passport are documents that verify your identity. A digital copy of a professional headshot should also be kept.
- ✓ **Letters of Recommendation** – ask your teachers, a mentor or coach. Keep several copies on hand.
- ✓ **Personal Statement** – write a short paragraph that highlights your core values, goals and interests.
- ✓ **SAT and ACT Scores** – your unofficial copies should be included.

University Affiliations

University of South Florida and St. Mary's University (Nova Scotia, Canada) have shown keen interest in Island Academy, and are extremely helpful with our students' college applications, especially with their pursuit of scholarships and financial aid.



University of South Florida is a public institution with a total undergraduate enrollment of 31,100, its setting is urban, and the campus size is 1,562 acres. USF's ranking in the 2015 edition of *Best Colleges and National Universities* is 161. They have more than 400 student organizations to check out, as well as a large Greek community. Their out-of-state tuition and fees are \$17,325 (2014-15) USD. Their application deadline is March 1 and their fee is \$30 USD. Scores for either the ACT or SAT test are due April 15th and they have an acceptance rate of 45.2 %.



SAINT MARY'S
UNIVERSITY SINCE 1802

One University. One World Yours.

Their international tuition is at least \$3,033.40 CAD/term. Their application deadline is March 15th and the fee is \$40 CAD.

Saint Mary's was named a top five Canadian undergraduate university in *Maclean's 2014 University Rankings*. They are also recognized as having the highest percentage of first year international students: 1,000+ internationals from 94 countries. SMU applies a globalized curriculum with opportunities to study and work abroad.

Important Web Links

College Guides

USA

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search>
<http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-colleges>
<http://www.collegemajors101.com/>
<http://www.zinch.com/>
<https://colleges.niche.com/>
<http://www.edupass.org/>

UK

<http://www.ucas.com/>
<http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/>

Canada

<http://www.ouac.on.ca/>
<http://www.topuniversities.com/where-to-study/north-america/canada/guide>

Global

<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/world-university-rankings/>

SAT

<http://www.collegeboard.org>
<https://student.collegeboard.org/css-financial-aid-profile>
**Register for your SAT's and get started on your Financial Aid applications*

<http://sat.collegeboard.org/register/sat-international-dates>
** Review the SAT's International Test Dates here*

American Student Visa

<http://barbados.usembassy.gov>

Canadian Study Permit

<http://www.cic.gc>

UK Study Permit

<https://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa>

Scholarship Search Engines

collegenet.com
fastweb.com
scholarships.com
scholarshipmonkey.com
<http://www.scholars4dev.com> - Canadian and European scholarships

National Student Loan Fund (NSLF)

<http://www.antigua.gov.ag>

<http://www.ab.gov.ag>

College Application Hubs

<http://www.commonapp.org>

<http://www.ucas.com>

<http://www.ouac.on.ca/>

IA Affiliates

<http://www.usf.edu> - University of South Florida

<http://www.smu.ca> - St. Mary's University

Local Banks

<http://antigua.scotiabank.com> - Scotia Bank

<http://www.ecabbank.com> - ECAB