



# US College Applications

The what, the how, and - importantly - the when of getting into the college of your choice

Applying to the US from the United Kingdom can be a bit tricky. First off, it's not as straightforward as UK University applications where pretty much all that is required are academic records and a personal statement. Also as a student in the UK, it can be easy to lose track of when to do the various things necessary when applying to US Schools. Student counsellors here may not be very aware of the process so it is up to the student and/or the parents to be more proactive and make sure that all the boxes are ticked. To help with the process, it can be helpful to have an overview. Let's break this down step by step and year by year:

## Year 11 to Lower 6th/Year 12:

Start to think about which schools to apply to: research should ideally start in Year 11-12 or Lower Sixth. Get to know what types of schools you'd be interested in, visit local **College Fairs** (such as Fulbright here in London!), talk to student reps. Get a better sense of which might be suitable for you – not everyone is Harvard material, nor should they be! With over 4,000 institutions, there are a great range of Colleges, so it's worth doing some homework to find

the best-fit school. There are counsellors in the US whose full-time job is to do just that, so finding outside help might well be worth it.

Also, begin to think about your **extracurricular activities** – these are important to US Colleges, so if you aren't as active as you should be by Year 11 or Lower 6th, then it is time to look into activities and/or sports outside of school to engage in.

Think about a teacher you might ask for **teacher recommendations** – remember – US schools expect a more thorough, detailed evaluation from your teacher about you – beyond just your academic performance. Request one from teachers who know you well.

Start your **ACT/SAT prep!** These are standardised tests required by most schools in addition to your application. Get an idea from your research the scores their admitted students get. You should aim to take your first test in April/May of your Year 12/Lower 6th. That way if you need to retake (and many students in the US take the test multiple times), you've got time to do so in June of that year and in Autumn of Year 13/Upper 6th. Schools also may require SAT Subjects Tests – again, make sure and schedule these

is. Please check the next issue of **The American** for more information on the SAT and ACT Tests.

## Upper Sixth/Year 13

Get started on your **applications and application essays**. Most schools accept the Common Application, but may require additional essays. These are important so make sure they are a true reflection of yourself. Applications will be due October for Early Decision and Early Action, December/January for Regular. Please see last month's issue of **The American** for discussion on the differences. Every school is different, so it's important to keep track of deadlines. Make sure you have your final tests taken in time for deadlines.

It may seem like a lot to do, but it is definitely worth the effort. Getting into your best-fit American College will pay off for the rest of your life!

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