



College and University Planning Timeline

Getting ahead in the college/university planning process helps ensure that ISB students arrive in their final year of High School well prepared for the fast approaching transition to life after ISB. The following checklist highlights some of the key steps that grades 9 – 12/13 students will need to take. Career and college research should be fun – so enjoy discovering more about your future!

First Steps in Planning Your Path 1: Grade 9

Gr 9 is the first year of a 4 year programme leading to a High School Graduation Diploma. This is the time to think about your long term plans and goals. What would you like to do when you leave school?

Though much of the Gr 9 curriculum is set, when given a choice of electives be sure to register for appropriate classes based on your talents and general interests.

Begin to think about your strengths and weaknesses, your likes and dislikes (academic and personal). What qualities and skills do you already have that can be built upon throughout High School? (Are you a linguist? Super-organized? A team player? A tech wizard?)

Get involved in extra-curricular activities that interest you. It will look good on a resume and such activities might last you a life-time.

Continue to develop good work habits that will be helpful as you progress to stimulating and challenging work in Gr 12 and beyond.

Research the world of work. There are thousands of jobs – do some internet research, and talk to your parents, relatives, family friends, teachers and counsellors about different jobs.

First Steps in Planning Your Path 2: Grade 10

Fall

Though much of the 10th grade curriculum is set – when given a choice or selecting electives, be sure to register for appropriate classes based on your talents and general interests.

Start a calendar with important dates and deadlines.

Draft a résumé if you do not already have one.

You will be assigned a counsellor and should make at least 2 appointments to see them this year!

Find out about the requirements for the various diplomas available (eg. Academic, General, IB, Individualized).

Discuss your plans to meet these with your counsellor.

Get involved with extracurricular activities that interest you.

Continue to develop good study habits/time management skills.

Compile a list of university majors/courses of study that interests you.

Attend college fairs in the area as well as presentations made by university representatives visiting ISB.

Take the Euroquest careers test administered by Step One, Ltd.

Spring

Plan to discuss your Euroquest careers test results with parents and counsellor. This should help you to evaluate your personality, interests, and skills.

Talk to your parents about financing your university studies.

Become familiar with college entrance exams like the SAT/ACT for the US. Plan to take practice tests using one of the commercially available college entrance exams prep books.

Explore summer opportunities such as jobs, internships, volunteer work, or summer school programmes.

Summer

Participate in summer programme explored in the spring.

Read a lot! Ask your teachers for reading lists for the upcoming school year.

Relax a bit as well. It is important to return from the summer break refreshed and ready build on the good foundation you've laid.

GRADE-11

September-December

Keep up those grades! Wherever in the world you apply, your grades and external exam predictions will be very important. Put forth your best effort to keep your academic performance high and try to improve where possible.

If you are a US citizen or permanent resident, obtain a Social Security number for use on college applications.

Take the PSAT when offered in October to all 11th graders at ISB.

Review the courses you are taking and extracurricular activities pursued. Colleges typically weigh rigorous classes, eg. AP and IB more heavily and they appreciate a well rounded person.

January-February

Review your PSAT scores including the section that details your incorrect responses and correct answers.

Begin reviewing SAT and/or ACT preparation books. Studying/revising just 15 minutes per night over the course of several months can make a big difference in your college admission test results!

Continue discussions with parents about college costs and funding, including the financial considerations of pursuing a university education in one country over another.

Know thyself! Review careers options and career profile. Also reflect on your interests, abilities, personal needs and goals. If a returning ISB student, consult your *Step One Inventory of Learning and Study Preferences* profile to help focus your college planning.

Meet with your counsellor and give them a general idea of your plans.

Research universities via internet, resource books and/or catalogues in the Guidance Office.

Use Family Connection for college research and updating your counsellor.

March-April

For US colleges take the April ACT and May SAT tests. *(Though generally comparable, the ACT focuses more on material students cover in high school classes, including science. By contrast the SAT is a "reasoning" test and is more focused on asking students to take basic skills and apply them. Taking both tests allows you to see which best demonstrates your high school learning.)*

Take the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) or IELTS (International English Language Testing System). Evidence of English proficiency is usually required of foreign passport holders from countries where English is not the official language. *(Note: The TOEFL/IELTS requirement is often waived for students pursuing the full IB or AP Diploma).* Check the specific requirements for demonstrating English proficiency of the universities you target.

For the UK, check out BMAT/UKCAT for medicine, and LNAT for law courses, and any other entry tests.

Meet with university representatives that visit the High School and local area fairs. Even if not planning to attend a certain school that is visiting ISB, you may come to see that particular college as a real application possibility after their presentation. At the very least, you learn about how universities generally present themselves and what they have on offer.

Determine which colleges you're most interested in visiting over the summer or during longer school breaks.

Check the Guidance and Counselling section of Blackboard for announcements, relevant articles (eg. Personal Statement/ College Essay guidelines).

Continue to meet with your counsellor, increasing the frequency of visits as you get deeper into the application process.

May-June

Research scholarship and/or sponsorship options.

Submit your résumé to teachers whom you will ask for recommendations.

Request at least three written references from teachers who know you well.

If applying for early decision or to certain courses that require early applications (e.g., Oxbridge, medicine, dentistry, and veterinary science in the UK) make sure that you have taken or have registered for all required tests prior to the close of junior year (eg UKCAT, BMAT, LNAT).

Contact colleges and universities for their brochures and information on open house events or campus tours. Firm up arrangements for summer university visits

Summer

Spend your summer wisely! Consider studying a subject of interest, read, travel, visit colleges, volunteer or gain some work experience. This adds strength to your application. If you wish to apply for medicine, veterinary science or teaching in the UK, remember that you must have some related work experience.

If you are doing an Extended Essay – write a good draft now!

GRADES 12&13 (FINAL YEAR)

September

Keep up the good work. Colleges will be reviewing your transcript and/or predicted grades looking for a strong academic record and extracurricular involvement.

Meet with your counsellor to review your college plans and academic record.

Research colleges based on the criteria most important to you: location, size, majors offered, activities offerings, etc. Narrow down your choices to a manageable list.

Keep a calendar/spreadsheet to record all application and scholarship deadlines.

Students applying to European colleges (other than in the UK) should check application deadlines as these vary enormously.

Put the finishing touches to your application essays and/or personal statements.

Register for TOEFL/ IELTS or SAT I and SAT II test if appropriate.

Take every opportunity to meet with college representatives visiting ISB.

UCAS (UK) online applications begin.

Meet with teachers you would like to write your references, if you have not done so already.

October

If you are NOT applying online, fill out draft copies of your applications. Once you have reviewed the completed drafts together with your counsellor, you may then transfer the information to the original document.

Take the October TOEFL test (if appropriate).

Continue to keep track of all application and scholarship deadlines.

Remember to send in all application materials well in advance of stated deadlines. Guidance and Counselling Services requires all supporting documents that it will send on your behalf be submitted at least three weeks in advance on the university's stated deadline.

Update your college lists in Family Connection.

November

If appropriate, arrange to release your standardized test scores to your chosen colleges before application deadlines.

Take November SAT I or SAT II Test (if appropriate).

Applications with December/January must be completed now, so they can be sent off before the school vacation.

December

Take the December SAT I or SAT II Test, if appropriate.

This will be the final set of SATs for most graduating seniors.

Gap Year students start thinking about how you might like to spend your year. You may need to research employment, travel or community service options.

January-February

Remember that admissions officers will be reviewing your senior year transcript, so keep working.

Many European and Asian university applications open in January or February, so check that you have the necessary documentation in plenty of time. If you are beginning the application process now, remember to meet with your counsellor to discuss your plans.

UK applicants can track the status of applications online. You should be receiving offers from universities, via UCAS in the coming months.

Keep you counsellor informed of offers made. Update Family Connection.

March

For UK students: you do not have to make any decision until you have received answers from all your colleges, or until May 1, whichever comes first.

European and Asian university applicants: check application deadlines and requirements, if you have not already applied.

April

Keep track of acceptances, denials, and financial aid awards and notify your counsellor of all admissions decisions.

UK students need to review acceptances and decide on a Firm and an Insurance choice. Discuss this with your counsellor before making a decision.

Check all information received from your chosen university, e.g., deposits to secure a place, housing application forms and deadlines.

May-June

UK students must complete and return the Final Statement of Decisions notification or do it online.

Write "thank you" letters to the colleges you have decided not to attend and decline their offers of admission. This is a courtesy and allows the college to offer the place to another applicant. UK applicants do not need to do this.

Fill out the housing request form at the college you will be attending. If you forget to do this, you may not be entitled to on-campus or college housing.

If necessary, request that your counsellor sends your final transcript to the college you will be attending.

Check out student visa requirements.

GRADUATION!!! CONGRATULATIONS!!!

But you are not finished yet! Turn over....

Just when you thought it was all over....a few reminders

Summer

For those requiring student visas – start the procedures.

Check the mail for housing and orientation information from the college you will be attending.

Pay close attention to all payment deadlines.

IB results will be out in early July. Some of you will need to forward these immediately to colleges in order to get firm acceptance.

Gap Year students – remember to have an enjoyable but productive year!

Keep in touch, there might be an ISB student that could use your advice about the college admissions process and “insider” information about the college you have chosen.

NEED HELP FINDING INFORMATION? CHECK OUT THE USEFUL WEBSITES LEAFLET IN THE GUIDANCE OFFICE AND SEE THE LINKS ON THE COUNSELLING PAGE OF BLACKBOARD.

HAPPY PLANNING AND RESEARCHING!

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING CONTACTS

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ACT – American College Test. A college entry test widely accepted across the US

AP – Advanced Placement Test. One year college level prep courses. Given once a year and used for college credit and placement. Scores are 1-5; often a 3 or better is a qualifying score for college credit.

Elective – A course which a student has the option of taking (or not) but is not specifically required for graduation.

EuroQuest – Commonly referred to as StepOne. A careers programme that helps students identify their career interests and possible courses of study for college/university.

Extended Essay – A major academic paper which IB Diploma candidate must submit.

IB – International Baccalaureate. A two year pre-college/university prep programme recognized world wide. Students at ISB can earn the full IB Diploma or take individual IB Certificates.

IB Predictions – IB predictions are exam scores which teachers expect students will earn prior to taking the final examinations. IB predictions are required by UK and Canadian universities (and elsewhere) for assessing academic potential.

IELTS – International English Language Testing System. An English language proficiency test often required by colleges as evidence of competence in English speakers for second language speakers.

Family Connection – A web-based programme used by Gr 11 and 12 students for college planning. It also allows counsellors to track applications.

PSAT/NMSQT - Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Qualifying Test given in October to Gr 11 students. Same format as the SAT with verbal and maths sections. Useful as an indicator of SAT performance, and forms the basis of some merit scholarships for US citizens.

SAT – Scholastic Aptitude Test. A college entrance test that measures verbal and mathematical reasoning.

SAT II – Subject Tests. 1 hour long multiple choice test measuring specific subject knowledge. Required by many highly competitive US colleges.

SSN – US Social Security Number

TOEFL – Test of English as a Foreign Language. Similar to IELTS – a test of English proficiency required by colleges for second language speakers.

UCAS – Universities and Colleges Admissions Service. A centralized college application system for UK universities.

