

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this brief overview is to offer the student a general framework within which to consider the university application and scholarship process so that applications can be made in a timely and appropriate fashion.

## **Role of the Counsellor**

The role of the Counsellor is to provide informed advice to the student in the university decision making process. The Counsellor can provide a broad range of information on universities, programs and the proper management of the admissions process. The Counsellor cannot make decisions for the student. It is always the responsibility of the student, in consultation with his/her parents, to decide on the avenue to pursue that best suits his/her interests and ambitions.

## **GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

Perhaps the single most important thing to understand and remember is that every university is autonomous and makes its own regulations without reference to any other university. Simply put, **each university sets its own entrance requirements, and application as well as scholarship deadlines.** Assume nothing, research everything, and check the facts with the Counsellor.

## **ADMISSIONS PROCEDURES**

Admission to most university programs is a two-stage process:

### ***STAGE 1***

The candidate must be eligible for general admission to the particular university. This normally involves completion of a High School Diploma with sufficient credits of an appropriate character and standard to meet the university's requirements. This is the essential first stage. If you are not eligible for general admission to the university, then the application process ends here. Assuming the student is eligible for general admission, then the application moves forward.

### ***STAGE 2***

The admissions office, or faculty, or department - depending on the system employed at that particular institution - determines if the student is eligible for admission to the particular program to which he/she has applied. Prerequisite courses and marks are evaluated to ascertain whether the student is competitive for admission. Universities calculate admissions averages based on their own formula and it is NOT necessarily the same as the School average. In some cases, students are also required to submit some type of Personal Statement of Experience. This Personal Statement of Experience is intended not only to collect information about the student that may help in the selection process; it is also intended to act as a check on the student's basic English language abilities (spelling and grammar). **Recently, highly competitive programs such as Commerce at Queen's have made the Personal Statement of Experience central to their decision making on admissions. You must also submit your GRADE 11 transcript. Please get a copy from the office.**

## THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

### GENERAL:

Admission to many universities or programs is highly competitive and selection committees at these universities can have a difficult time making decisions between competing candidates especially if the candidate's average is near the "cut-off" which is the MINIMUM average for acceptance to the program. Here are a few tips to enhance your chances of being accepted to the program of your choice:

- i) Understand that **admission to university is a privilege and not a right**. No university is required to admit any student. The university will decide whether you are an appropriate and acceptable fit. Therefore, if you want to attend university you must be prepared to earn the privilege.
- ii) Be realistic. Application to universities, especially those that are highly competitive, can be a very time consuming process for all concerned. Carefully evaluate the universities to which you intend to apply to ensure they have the programs you desire and that you have the appropriate prerequisites and marks for admissions purposes. Your time is valuable and so is that of the universities. To apply to a university just to see what will happen is a waste of everyone's time and your money. Avoid it.
- iii) Apply early. Universities receive many thousands of applications each year. Early applications - those that arrive well before the deadline - ease the burden on admissions staff and this is appreciated. Also, the university has more time to evaluate your application fully and sympathetically. Moreover, cut-offs change every year somewhat and, if you are near the cut-off average from the previous year, you may be conditionally accepted before the university learns that the "new" cut-off has risen.
- iv) Complete the application form fully and neatly. Your acceptance will be delayed if your application is incomplete.
- v) Modesty is a virtue, but this is not the time to be virtuous. Modesty tends to be a Canadian cultural trait. Part of the job of applying successfully to a competitive university or program is letting that institution know your various talents. Always be honest. Use a grad planner form available from the Counsellor to help you organize your thoughts about volunteer experiences, school trips, leadership, sports, student council experience, and part time work.

### Helpful hints:

- a) Photocopy the original application, put the original aside, and then complete the photocopied version in pencil. Check for spelling and grammatical errors. When you're done, have it checked by your English teacher or the Counsellor. Once that is done, neatly copy the answers on to the original application in ink.
- b) Read all instructions and follow them exactly. If you don't understand something, **don't guess or assume** - bring all the paperwork to the counsellor.

C) If the university requires that you provide letters of reference, please give your references ample time to write a good letter on your behalf. Remember that no one is obliged to write a letter on your behalf. You are asking a favor and if the person declines – for whatever reason – accept it graciously.

d) Include the application/processing fee - never send cash.

e) **Sign and date the application.** The application is a legal document and without a valid signature and date the university will simply return it to you. This will delay the process and you could miss your deadline. **Ensure that your application is ready to go well in advance of the application deadline - at least two weeks!** Applying online is becoming increasingly popular. If you do apply online, print off a copy of the application before you send it for your university file.

f) Purchase a file folder and keep copies of *everything* you receive from the universities and copies of *everything* you send to the universities. Especially note any application number that has been assigned to you. The universities track your application by your application number and so, if you need to speak with them, they will need your application number.

g) You will receive an acknowledgement from the university that they have received your application - usually about a month after your initial application. Don't hesitate to contact the university admissions office if you think that there might be some problem with your application. When you do so, ensure you have your application number at hand.

h) Many universities offer early acceptance for those students who have applied early. Early acceptance is ALWAYS conditional. If you fail to fulfill the conditions that are associated with generally maintaining your overall marks through June, then the offer of admission will be withdrawn.

k) Scholarship and residence material is usually sent separately.

l) Communications is important in the admission process. Be sure you respond to all offers of admission and send appropriate documents by the deadline date or your offer of admission may be withdrawn!

## **APPLYING TO CANADIAN UNIVERSITIES**

Application forms to most Canadian universities are available online.

In all provinces except Ontario, students apply directly to the University of Choice for admission. Application deadlines, standards and procedures vary at each university and often in different programs at each university. It is vital that the student ascertain correct deadlines for universities and programs of choice at an early date in the Grade 12 year. Generally speaking, it is best to apply to the Ontario universities before winter break in December and to the others in January.

Most universities in Canada have an electronic version of their application online. Please take great care if you choose to apply electronically especially with your grammar and spelling. Also, make certain that you print off a copy of the completed application for your files.

The Ontario application system is unique and requires some explanation. All students applying for undergraduate admission to any Ontario university must apply to the *Ontario University Application Centre (OUAC)* which is located in Guelph. Students **CANNOT** apply to the individual Ontario University directly. Each applicant is allowed to apply to THREE (3) universities in Ontario for a single fee – additional choices can be made for an additional fee.

The OUAC processes the application and then notifies the universities of choice of the applicant's name address and program interests. It is only after this process is complete that the university contacts the applicant requesting transcripts and supplementary information. Offers of admission are sent by the university BUT acceptances of these offers by the student are sent to the OUAC which then notifies the university on the applicant's behalf.

**NOTE:** *It is crucially important to understand that an applicant may not hold acceptances at two Ontario universities at the same time. On receipt from the applicant of notification to accept the university's conditional offer of acceptance, the OUAC automatically cancels any previous university acceptances by the applicant.*

## **APPLYING TO AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES**

Applying to American universities is a very time-consuming task. If you intend to apply to a highly competitive American university, expect to invest at least 40 to 80 hours in the application process and this work will all fall during the first term of Grade 12. There are thousands of universities in the United States and each makes its own rules without reference to any another. A simple rule of thumb is that the more competitive the university, the more demanding the application requirements. Expect to have to fill out lengthy forms, write essays, and have two or three teachers write letters of reference on your behalf. Also, you will need to write the SAT I and SAT II examinations (see below for explanation) and/or the ACT. Application deadlines vary but as a general rule of thumb think in these terms: most California universities have deadlines in mid- to late November, the highly competitive universities have deadlines of January 1 or 15, the competitive universities have deadlines of February 1 or 15, the less competitive universities often chose March 1 or 15 and the others tend to have rolling (open) deadlines. Competitive universities in the U.S. mail all regular offers of admission on April 1. If the student has chosen to apply early Action/Early Decision then the application deadline is usually November 1 and candidates will be notified on December 15.

### **SAT and ACT**

The Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) has two versions and these may NOT be written on the same day.

The SAT I is a test of verbal, writing and mathematical skills and is called a reasoning test. It is a three and three-quarter hour examination and each of the three sections (writing, verbal and math) is measures on a scale of 200 - 800. A perfect score is a combined total of 2400. Highly

competitive universities in the U.S. usually expect a score in the 2100 - 2400 range. As a matter of record, 200 students who applied to Harvard for admission recently and who had a perfect SAT score were not admitted.

The SAT II is a series of subject specific tests. The number of SAT II tests required is established by the individual university and will range from none to three depending upon the competitive nature of the university in question. Highly competitive U.S. universities would expect students to write three tests. (N.B. At the latest, students would write the SAT I in early November and the SAT II in early December of Grade 12. To do so, the student must normally register by late September).

The ACT is more subjects based than the SAT reasoning test. It tests students' knowledge of English, math, science and writing. It is the most widely accepted test at American Colleges. It is scored on composite scale out of 36. Effective October 2005, SJR has been the Winnipeg test centre for the ACT. Students can elect to write the SAT I and II, the ACT or both. The real advantage in writing both is that the student can choose to submit either the SAT scores or the ACT scores which ever is better. If both sets of scores are strong, then submitting both is strong evidence to the colleges of choice that you are a very competitive candidate.

Most American Universities operate a program known as Early Action or Early Decision (EA/ED). If the student applies under ED he/she promises to attend that university if accepted. The EA/ED deadline is usually November 1. The universities respond by mid-December. Students may make an EA/ED application to only ONE university in the United States. Statistically, the chances of being accepted under Early rather than Regular Decision are much greater.

Registration forms for the ACT are available in the Counseling office. Students for the SAT can register over the Internet at <http://www.collegeboard.com/splash> Canadian universities DO NOT require that applicants submit SAT or ACT scores.

## **ACQUIRING INFORMATION ON UNIVERSITIES**

### **Publications:**

The counseling office contains a wide variety of University Calendars which provide prerequisites as well as information on appropriate course selection and scholarship opportunities. All students are welcome to make use of the resources it has to offer, but no materials of any kind can be taken or borrowed without permission. Guides and practice tests to write the SAT I and/or SAT II, ACT, and TOEFL are available at McNally-Robinson booksellers at Grant Park Shopping Centre.

### **Admissions and Scholarship Application Forms:**

The counseling office has admission and scholarship application forms for most Canadian Universities and programs. If not, you can access them on line.

**Electronic:**

Explore Gray Academy of Jewish Education's new website. Its primary purpose is to provide students with a simple, relatively straightforward explanation of where to find information on the Internet that is both timely and relevant.

**Some Useful Websites:**

<http://www.uwaterloo.ca/canu/index.html>

This index of Canadian university home pages also provides links to the MacLean's Magazine rankings, information for international students, university home pages and listings of university programs. Bookmark this site!

<http://www.schoolsincanada.com>

This site allows students to search for universities and colleges in each province by discipline. Brief descriptions of each university are provided including web links to each school.

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

The Ontario Universities Application Centre (OUAC) is the central clearing house of applications to universities located in Ontario. All undergraduate applications are administered through this organization. The site provides details about many application procedures as well as links to university home pages.

<http://www.schoolnet.ca/home/e/resources>

School net is a government supported web site designed for high school students making educational and career decisions.

<http://www.schoolfinder.com>

This site offers students access to a large number of resources such as university searches, scholarship links, virtual campus tours and career information.

<http://www.scholarshipscanada.com>

This site allows students to submit a personal profile and it will let students know of scholarships for which they might want to apply. This is an invaluable site for students looking for financial solutions to their post secondary education. Bookmark this site!

**Help**

Students can make appointments with Ms Peters during common spares, at morning break, lunch break, or before or after school.

**UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS TIMELINE 2009-2010****SEPTEMBER**

**Events: Meet with Ms Peters**

**Deadlines This Month:**

Application deadline to write the SAT in October is in early September.

Students intending to apply to American universities should contact those universities and have an application package sent

**Deadlines Next Month:**

Application deadline to write the SAT in December is in mid- October

**OCTOBER****Events:**

University advisors from University of Winnipeg and University of Manitoba do presentations at Gray Academy.

Grade 12 students with an average of approximately 85% or higher are invited to attend the University of Manitoba "Evening of Excellence"

Grade 11 and Grade 12 Parent University Information Evening

ACT written at SJR on October 28

**Deadlines This Month:**

Application deadline to write the SAT in December is in mid- October

**Deadlines Next Month:**

Application deadline to write the SAT in January is in mid- November

Application deadline for many universities in California

Early Decision/Early Action deadline for US colleges is November 1

**NOVEMBER****Events**

Early Decision/Early Action deadline for US colleges

**Deadline This Month**

Application deadline to write the SAT in January is in mid- November

Application deadline for many universities in California

**Deadlines Next Month**

Application to the Ontario Universities Application Centre should be mailed by December 1 for any student wishing to apply to an Ontario university

Advanced Early Admission applications to the U of M and U of W are due December 1

**DECEMBER****Events**

ACT written at SJR

SAT I and II written on the first Saturday of the month at the University of Manitoba

**Deadline This Month**

Application to the Ontario Universities Application Centre should be mailed by December 1 for any student wishing to apply to an Ontario university

Advanced Early Admission U of M and U of W December 1

**Deadlines Next Month**

Application deadline for most competitive American universities is January 1 or January 15

**JANUARY****Deadlines This Month**

Application deadline for most competitive American universities is January 1 or January 15

**Deadlines Next Month**

McGill University applications are due February 1

## **FEBRUARY**

### **Events**

Info Days at the U of M and U of W

### **Deadlines This Month**

McGill University applications due Feb. 1

### **Deadlines Next Month**

University of Winnipeg early application deadline for scholarship consideration due March 1

## **MARCH**

### **Events**

Ontario universities begin to offer conditional acceptances of admission last chance to change

Ontario university choices

### **Deadlines This Month**

University of Winnipeg early application deadline for scholarship consideration

## **APRIL**

### **Events**

Notification of acceptances to competitive American universities mailed April 1

ACT written at SJR

## **MAY**

### **Deadlines Next Month and Beyond**

Early June - students must respond to the OUAC to accept or decline Ontario University offers of admission. Failure to do so by the deadline will result in the universities withdrawing their offer of admission.