



THE EASY GUIDE TO US ADMISSIONS



ABOUT HALE

Hale Education Group is the leading independent educational consulting firm in the GCC focusing on US university admissions. We provide college admissions counseling to Emirati and international students seeking admission to the full spectrum of US universities and colleges. Our innovative model has evolved from our deep background and broad experience in admissions counseling in the United States. We center our services on providing intensive one-on-one counseling and guidance to students in every aspect of US college admissions, based on the philosophy of finding the right "fit." Hale's mission is to guide and empower students seeking to realize their maximum personal, academic, and professional potential through the pursuit of American and Canadian higher education.

To learn more about our team of counselors, please visit:

www.haleeducation.com

We abide by ethical practices, meaning no commission-based deals with universities and no placement fees. Working exclusively in the interests of students is our core value.



ADMISSION STATISTICS 2023

MIT Acceptances



2

7/8

Ivy League Universities
Accepted Hale Students

CalTech Acceptances



2

71%

of Hale Students
Received Merit Scholarships/Aid

Stanford Acceptances



2

100%

of Families Seeking
Financial Assistance Received
Aid/Scholarships

HALE SCHOLARSHIPS



Over

\$53 million

in merit scholarships

Over \$10 million+ in merit scholarships in 2023 alone



DARTMOUTH



UCLA



Massachusetts
Institute of
Technology

Yale

NYU



COLUMBIA
UNIVERSITY



So you're thinking of pursuing undergraduate studies in the **United States**?

Here's what you need to know:

WHY THE UNITED STATES?

Many countries have strong academic institutions of higher learning. However, there are numerous factors that make the United States the best option for international students. Not only are American universities among the highest ranked globally, but they also bring with them unique benefits:

- **Flexibility in Academic Curriculum**
- **Holistic Education**
- **Diversity of Programs and Courses**
- **Resources and Facilities**
- **Undergraduate Research**
- **Scholarships**



UNDERSTANDING ACADEMIC FLEXIBILITY

WHAT IS A MAJOR?

A major is your field of concentration during college. Across the 3,000+ universities in the US, there are a wide variety of options to choose from. For example, you can major in economics, business administration, entrepreneurship, mechanical engineering, psychology sports management, marine biology, history, chemistry, and so much more. Some universities, such as Yale and Brown, even let you create your own major. In most universities, it is even possible to double major (pursue two majors simultaneously) and/or pick minors in addition to the major.

WHAT IS A MINOR?

Minors are additional concentrations that you can undertake to supplement a major or to pursue alternative interests, such as music, computer science, math, or entrepreneurship. In comparison to majors, minors require fewer courses to complete.



WHAT IS A LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION?

In addition to majors and minors, the US has several universities focused on the liberal arts. A liberal arts education emphasizes critical thinking, communication, a broad foundation in core subjects, and transferable skills across fields, such as writing and analysis. Many students choose to pursue a liberal arts education to strengthen their employability - even within STEM fields - as it teaches them how to formulate ideas and communicate effectively. Students graduate with a BA (Bachelor of Arts) or BS (Bachelor of Science).

SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS

If liberal arts sounds appealing but you are also interested in attaining a BSE (Bachelor of Science in Engineering), the US has a program designed just for you: the 3+2 Program. Students can choose to pursue a degree at a liberal arts institution for three years followed by a degree at a top engineering program for two years. This way, students can get a well-rounded education while also gaining the necessary technical skills. Students graduate in five years with two degrees: a BA or BS, and a BSE. Other unique programs include 4+1 Bachelor and Masters Programs, which allow students to receive both a bachelor's and master's degree in five years, as opposed to the more traditional six. These two flexible programs are among the many opportunities available to students pursuing higher education in the United States.



In addition to academic flexibility, students can pursue a holistic education in the US. This means that learning extends beyond the classroom through extracurriculars, research, study abroad, internships, and co-op programs. The emphasis is not on rote memorization; it is on the complete development of the individual through experiential learning.

ACTIVITIES

Students in the US are encouraged to take advantage of extracurricular opportunities available to them on their campuses. Some examples of extracurricular activities include organizations like Model United Nations found at many campuses across the US, and research opportunities in both the hard and soft sciences that students can pursue with their professors.

STUDY ABROAD

While there is an abundance of opportunities on campus, students can also participate in study abroad programs.

Students studying abroad choose to attend university in a foreign country for either a semester or a year and often receive credit for doing so. Princeton, for example, has programs in China, Brazil, and France, while the University of Chicago has programs in Hong Kong, Beijing and Delhi.



INTERNSHIPS AND CO-OP PROGRAM

For students interested in boosting their resumes and securing relevant, paid work experience before they graduate, some schools in the US offer robust co-op programs. These programs allow students to work and study full-time on alternating schedules. Some schools which are known for the co-op program and strong job placement are Northeastern and Drexel. Students not engaging in a formal co-op program are encouraged to apply for and arrange summer internships; often, the university will provide application support.



UNDERSTANDING VARIETY

In addition to the aforementioned characteristics perks of a US education, the US has myriad campus types, sizes, and locations, leaving students with a multitude of options.



Urban Location:
NYU



Rural Location:
Williams College

WHAT IS A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY?

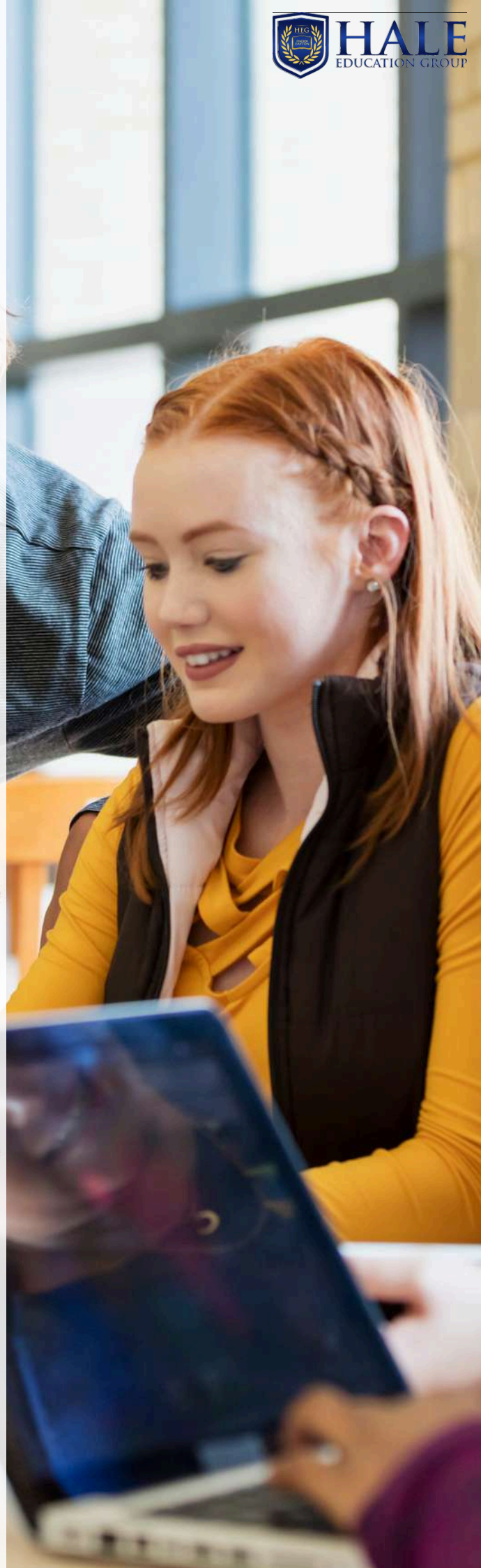
Public universities can usually be identified by their name: University of [Insert State Name].

Some examples are: University of California, Berkeley; University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; and the University of Virginia. Public universities tend to be larger and attract more in-state students. While public universities are cheaper, they have less money available to provide financial aid, especially for international students. They also give preferential treatment to in-state residents in the admissions process, which makes it much more difficult to get accepted as an international student.

WHAT IS A PRIVATE UNIVERSITY?

All other universities are considered private universities. Some examples include Johns Hopkins University, Duke University, University of Chicago, and Williams College. While they tend to be smaller, they also have a tendency to be more expensive. That being said, they have more money available for financial aid and scholarships, as they are much wealthier. Private universities rely primarily on the donations of wealthy alumni for their finances - not public funding - and some have incredibly large endowments.

Harvard's endowment, for example, is over \$49 billion and Johns Hopkins spends \$3.1 billion on research every year.



SIZE: DOES IT MATTER?

In the US, some universities have student bodies as small as 1,000 undergraduate students, whereas some have over 40,000 undergraduate students. So, how does this affect a student's experience?

Undergraduate Class Size



UC BERKELEY:
30,778



NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY:
23,057



BOSTON COLLEGE:
9,575



USC
21,000

Some students prefer an intimate environment where they can interact more personally with their professors and meet the majority of their peers. Others prefer the anonymity that comes with a larger university and its wider array of resources. Typically, large university classes are taught by teaching assistants (TAs), some of whom are graduate students, and the lectures are conducted by professors. However, at any university, by the time you are a junior or senior, class sizes will be smaller.

FINDING THE RIGHT FIT

Given the diversity of the US universities highlighted above, how do you pick which school is the right one for you? How many schools should you apply to?

RANKINGS



Forbes

The
Economist

Many students and parents are concerned with official rankings released by organizations like US News, Forbes, The Economist, and QS. However, different ranking lists use different methodologies. The Economist's rankings, released for the first time in 2015, take into consideration students' expected earnings after college, a metric unique to them.

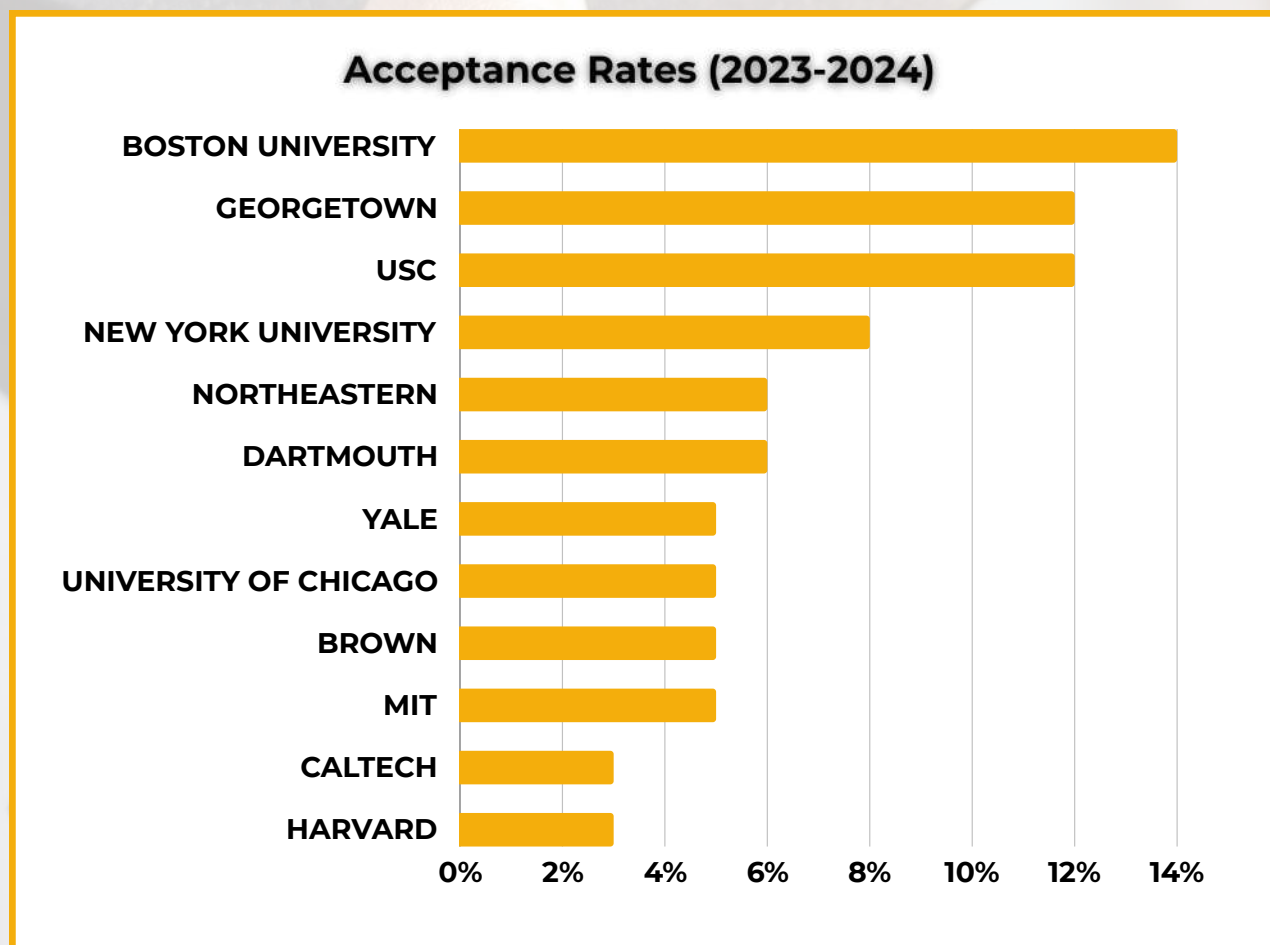
COST OF ATTENDANCE

While choosing universities to apply to, students and families should also consider the total cost of attendance which includes tuition, room and board, books, and more. For example, while most private universities in coastal cities currently cost somewhere between \$65,000 and \$85,000 per year, some provide merit scholarships or even need-based financial aid for international students.



SELECTIVITY AND A BALANCED COLLEGE LIST

It is no doubt that acceptance rates for US universities have been declining, and continue to decline.



Students should aim to apply to universities that have a range of acceptance rates, while also choosing schools that have the right environment, majors, and activities for them.

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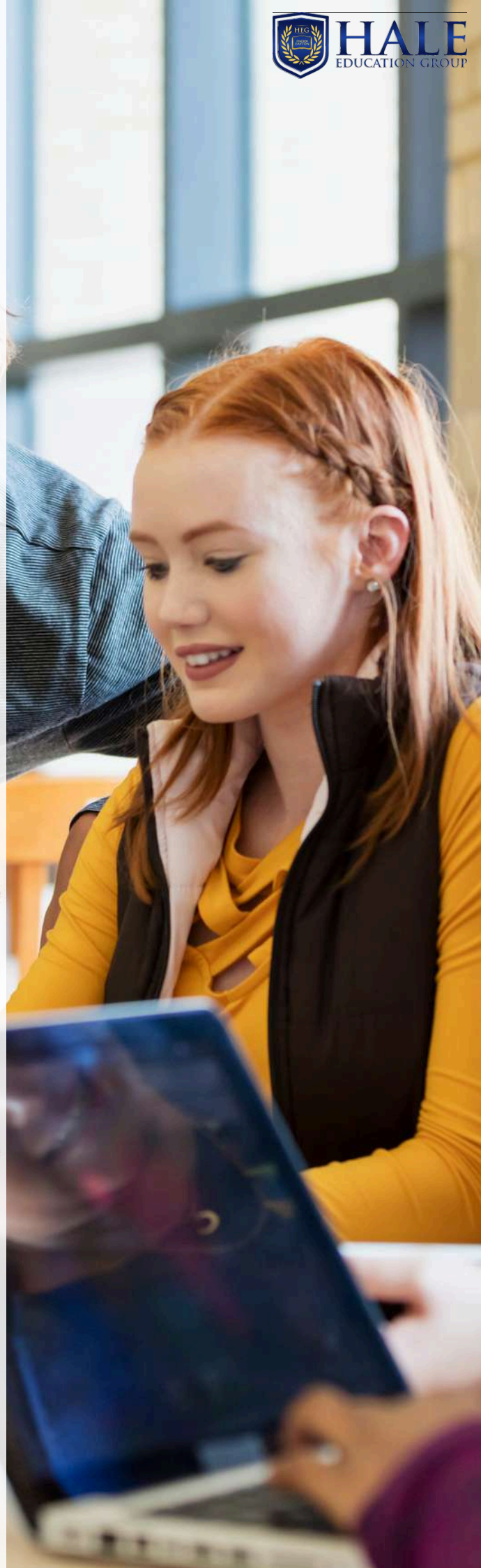
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APPLICATION COMPONENTS

So, how do you get into your dream university? Admissions officers review applicants holistically, considering not only academic record, but also factors including extracurricular activities, test scores, and essays.

HERE ARE THE MAJOR COMPONENTS:

- **Academic Record**
- **Standardized Tests**
- **Extracurricular Activities**
- **Letters of Recommendation**
- **Essays**
- **Interviews (if applicable)**

UNDERSTANDING THE ACADEMIC RECORD:

All four years of high school are considered in the application process, but the most important grades are those in the penultimate year. Universities want to see that you are challenging yourself within your curriculum - choosing to take AP courses, pursuing an IB Diploma, and completing A-Levels. Keep in mind that both the rigor of your curriculum as well as your course selection are important. If you are taking easier or fewer courses just to get better grades, this will be evident to admissions officers and will hurt your chances at the most selective universities.



STANDARDIZED TESTS

Citizens of non-Anglophone countries (countries outside of the US, Canada, UK, Australia, New Zealand, etc.) are often required to take an English Language Proficiency test, including the TOEFL or the IELTS. Additionally, students are strongly urged to take the SAT or the ACT to support their applications for more competitive universities. However, there are an increasing number of test-optional universities, so there are alternative options if a student cannot score well on the SAT / ACT after proper preparation. The first step is identifying which of the two exams you should take. Every year, universities will publish the average ACT/SAT score of accepted students, as well as the 25th/75th percentile scores of accepted students.

SAT OR ACT

SAT

- Scale: 400 - 1600
- Average Score: 1030
- A score of 1400 places you in the 92nd percentile
- Math and Reading (each scored out of 800)
- Writing - Optional
- Seven international test dates per year (March, May, June, August, October, November, December)

ACT

- Scale: 1 - 36
- Average Score: 20
- A score of 30 places you in the 93rd percentile
- English, Math, Reading, and Science
- Writing - Optional
- Seven international test dates per year (August, September, November, January, March, May, June)

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

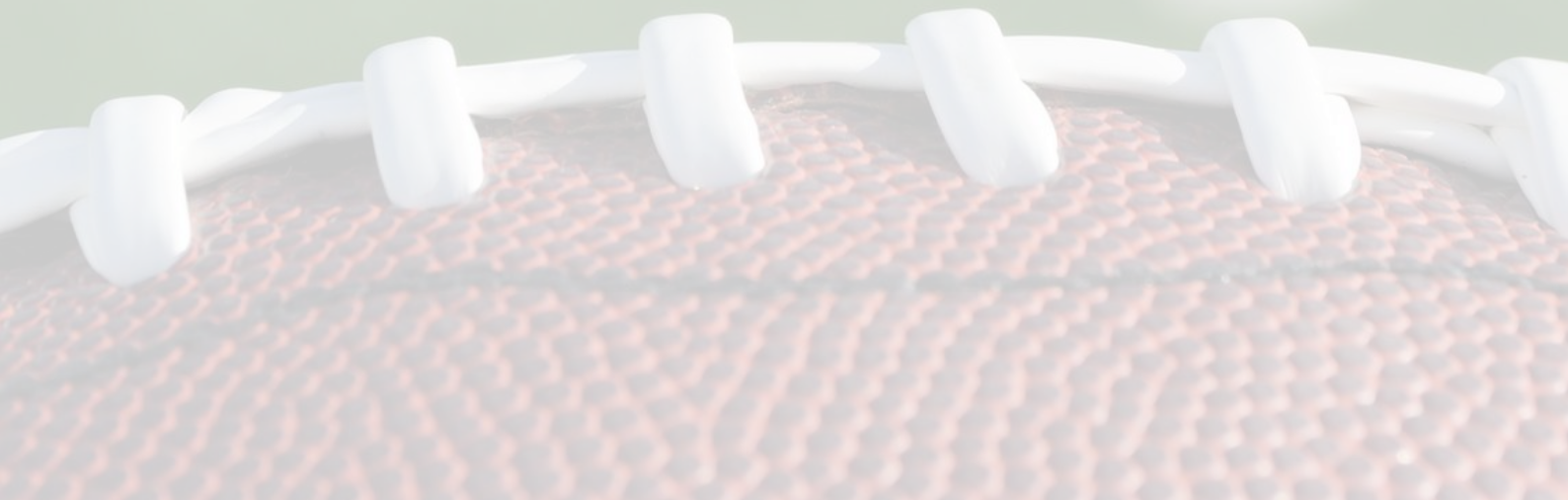
Extracurricular activities can include: work experience, volunteering, special interests, athletics, and many more! Depth is better than breadth. In other words, it's better to commit to 3-4 activities over all four high school years than to participate in 7-10 activities, and only commit one hour per week to each one. Activities don't necessarily have to be associated with a prospective major. Students interested in science, for example, can pursue debate if they're passionate about it. Activities from all four years are considered in the application.

Students should aim to demonstrate:

- **Commitment**
- **Passion**
- **Leadership**
- **Determination**

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Many private universities will require two letters of recommendation from teachers that you choose - ideally ones that know you well and that have taught you in your penultimate year - as well as a counselor recommendation. You can also ask for a supplementary recommendation, but only if the recommender has interacted with you in a different context and can shed additional light on your character and achievements that the other recommenders cannot. It is important to note that different schools have different requirements, so it's always important to check school-specific guidelines.



- **One letter from a guidance counselor or school administrator**
- **Two letters from teachers**
- **Optional:**
 1. **Peer Recommendation**
 2. **Employer Recommendation**

UNDERSTANDING THE INTERVIEWS

Interviews generally last between 45 to 60 minutes, and will be more of an informal conversation where the interviewer gets to know the student, and the student is able to ask questions to the interviewer about the university. Students should prepare for interviews and carefully think about the “why this university” question. Not all schools will offer interviews; if an interview is not available, it will not harm the student in any way. Interviews are mostly conducted virtually, either by admissions offers, alumni or current student volunteers.



ESSAYS

Admissions officers spend 70% of their time looking at the writing, and 30% of their time looking at other components of the application. The content of the writing as well as its structure and style are all important. It isn't always easy to come up with a strong personal statement topic, and sometimes the best strategy is to talk about something simple - the goal is to communicate the student's personality. It is important that multiple people read the personal statement before submission. In addition to the 650 word Common App personal statement, which highlights a student's personality and, in many cases, growth, some schools will also have additional supplemental questions. Most supplements will require applicants to write about why they're applying to the specific school. These answers need to be well researched, mentioning courses or professors in the university that the student finds interesting. Other supplements are more creative; for example, Stanford asks students to write a letter to a future roommate. More selective universities will have more, or longer, supplemental essays. Columbia, for example, has six supplemental essays.



ESSAYS

Common Application

- Used by over 600 college and universities
- School-specific supplements
- One 650-word personal statement
- Essay prompts for 2023-2024 -
 1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
 2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
 3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
 4. Reflect on something that someone has done for you that has made you happy or thankful in a surprising way. How has this gratitude affected or motivated you?
 5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
 6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
 7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

University of California (UC) Application

- One independent application for all UC schools
- Select 4 out of 8 personal insight questions

SELECTING YOUR UNIVERSITY

After you have received your admissions offers, you typically have until May 1st to submit your deposit at the university in which you intend to enroll. Make sure you understand that you are choosing a home for four years; do not only make your choice based on the rankings or reputation of the university. Assess each university you have been accepted to holistically, just as they have assessed you, and view them within the wider context of location, employment opportunities, and quality of life.

THE STUDENT VISA PROCESS

Once you have submitted your deposit, you will be given detailed instructions on how to apply for an F1 student visa. If you follow the instructions carefully and are honest in your application, this will be a straightforward and simple process.



PACK YOUR BAGS!

Student visa in hand, a place at your dream university secured, you will head on to the US in the summer after high school graduation to commence on what will definitely be the most rewarding four years of your life. Make friends from different cultures, explore your passions, get out of your comfort zone, push yourself academically and enjoy this tremendously rewarding journey!



For more information, please contact

Hale Education Group



+971 4 584 4937



+971 50 248 4253



team@haleeducation.com



www.haleeducation.com



@haleeducationgroup



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