



the
**STUDENT
AMBASSADOR
PROGRAM**

**International Student's
Guide to Admissions**

Coordinated By
the Assembly of International Students
at the University of Pennsylvania



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1 Introduction

↓ Determining your International Status

At Penn, there is only one application whether you are applying from overseas, have a US passport, or International citizenship.

You do not need to determine your international status at Penn. Instead, your application will be read by an admissions officer who is familiar with your high school and system of education.

You can find contact information for the admissions officer who works with applicants from the country of your high school by visiting:

<http://www.admissions.upenn.edu/contact/>.

Each college of university will handle international applications differently however, so it is important for you to thoroughly check the websites of all schools to which you will be applying.

2 the **Application** checklist

Make sure...

- * You have filled in the Common Application. The Common Application (CommonApp) is available online at www.commonapp.org.
- * You have filled in the required Supplements for each school. Each school is different so make sure you check the supplements required for each form. These supplements are available on both the individual schools' websites and the CommonApp website.
- * You have taken the necessary standardized tests (SAT, ACT, TOEFL) and have sent your scores to each school.
- * You have at least 2 recommendation letters.
- * Your transcripts have been sent.
- * You have written your resume/CV.
- * You have completed the necessary Financial Aid forms for each school, if you are applying for Financial Aid. Allocate extra time to collect bank statements and tax returns. Always be in contact with the school in case you need extra time to collect documents.
- * You have submitted the application fee or fee waiver for each school



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Make sure you are aware of all deadlines, especially for sending your standardized test scores. It may also be helpful to know the procedures about obtaining an Application Fee Waiver when applying to colleges.

3 a **Timeline** for applications

↙ **Early Decision / Early Action**

Form Lower Six / IB 1 / 11th Grade

January - May

Take the SAT.
Think about what field you want to study at university.

May - June

Take SAT Subject Tests, if required.
Work hard and keep up your grades.

Form Upper Six / IB 2 / 12th Grade

August - September

Make a list of universities you would like to apply to, in order of preference.
Make a checklist of documents you need for each university, together with deadlines.
Print out applications if needed and start working on them.
Write your college essay and make sure it has been read by one teacher by early September.
Familiarize yourself with the common application and common application supplements for the schools you are applying to by visiting www.commonapp.org.
Get your teachers to write recommendation letters.

October

Take the SAT again if needed.
Fill out Financial Aid forms for both early and regular applications.
Follow up with teacher recommendations.
Send your early decision or early action applications well before the university deadlines.
Once early applications are in, begin work on regular-decision applications as a backup.

Regular Decision

Form Lower Six / IB 1 / 11th Grade

January - May

Take the SAT.

Think about what field you want to study at university.

May - June

Take SAT Subject Tests, if required.

Work hard and keep up your grades.

Form Upper Six / IB 2 / 12th Grade

September

Identify colleges that you would like to apply to; get applications.

Begin working on college applications; note deadlines.

Register for any additional SAT I , SAT II, ACT, or TOEFL exams.

Request letters of recommendation from your teachers.

Prepare your resume.

Submit requests for transcripts and counselor recommendations from your counselor well before the application deadline.

October

Take SAT I, SAT II, ACT, or TOEFL exams, if needed.

Continue preparing and finalizing college list.

Begin researching financial aid and scholarships.

Begin drafting college essays.

November

Take SAT I, SAT II, ACT, or TOEFL exams. You are running out of chances to take the tests.

Finalize college list.

Complete college applications and submit them to your counselor.

Begin filling in any necessary Financial Aid forms
Keep copies of all forms and applications you complete.
Maintain grades and extracurricular activities.

December

Regular Decision admission deadlines are usually December 15th or January 1st – check your college application materials.

Submit college applications with January deadlines by December. If possible, also submit financial aid documents at this time.

January

This is most likely your last chance to take any standardized tests. Check with each school to see if they accept tests written in January.

Submit any other applications and financial aid forms.

4 Tips to help with your application

✚ Mailing your Application

Make sure have an extra set of copies of all the documents you submit, in case your application papers get lost in the mail.

If you send applications to more than one school and make copies of the documents required for each application (recommendation letters, evaluations), make sure that every copy of your document has an official signature.

Sometimes schools will ask you to put each document (recommendation letter, transcript, etc) in a different envelope. To save money on mailing costs, put each item into its own envelope and then put all the small envelopes into one bigger envelope for each school. So you will have one big envelope per school, as opposed to several smaller ones.

Every document you submit in your application **MUST** be an official document issued by your institution. As a proof of legitimacy, it is highly recommended that you send your documents in an envelope with your institution seal and the signature of a school officer on the front of it. This way the admissions officers will be certain that your application wasn't tampered with.

The deadline of your application is the last day you can mail your documents by mail if the deadline is a 'postmarked' deadline. If the deadline is a 'received by' deadline, then you should account for travelling time when mailing your application.

Submit your materials and application electronically whenever possible. Check with the school to find out their preferred method of sending your materials.



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Make sure your envelopes get sent to the right place! Double-check addresses, make sure to write the country name at the bottom, and type out and print address labels.

↙ The Do's & Don'ts of Applications

General Application Tips

Do

Use the common application.

Stand out/be special in some field that you are passionate about. It does not necessarily have to be academics.

Be thorough and focus on both academics and extra-curricular activities.

Make your application as cohesive as possible.

If you think there is something that makes your application weak, try to explain why this happened. For example, if you are usually a straight A student, but you had a bad semester, try to explain why this happened –if you had a family problem, if you were ill, etc.

Fill in all blanks and answer all questions in the application.

Don't

Send the same supplement essay to multiple schools. Officers can recognize standard applications easily. This might give them the impression that you do not have enough interest in their school.

Exaggerate your qualities.

Think that only good grades are going to get you in. Universities look for well-rounded applicants.

Contradict yourself. For example, if your got a D in your music class, don't exaggerate your performance in a musical or orchestra.

Hide your weaknesses, especially if they are obvious—like grades on your transcripts.

Leave any field blank—write N/A, but only as a last resort.

Force yourself to answer an optional question if you have nothing to say.



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Take the time to get to know how to use the common application. It will make applying to multiple schools so much easier! View an interactive common app tutorial here: <http://tinyurl.com/CAtutorial>

Essay Tips

Do

Be genuine!

Your writing should reflect your voice and personality. Aim to provide an image of yourself through your essays.

Start early! Make as many revisions as possible, proofread, and always ask for a second opinion.

Research – know the specific qualities that each university is looking for.

Sell yourself (tastefully!). Demonstrate your strengths and your abilities as much as possible.

Stand out.

Respect the word limit.

Financial Aid Tips

Do

Research which schools are need-blind for all applicants including international applicants.

Waive application or test fees if you are eligible.

Don't

Write about your physical characteristics. Admission officers are looking to get to know who you are, not what you look like.

Procrastinate. A rushed essay will look bad and misrepresent you to the admissions officers.

Brag about every little thing you've ever done- you will come across as pompous.

Write a clichéd essay. Don't try and be what you think the admissions officers want you to be.

Write significantly less than the word limit.

Exceed the word limit. Admissions officers have thousands of essays to read.

Don't

Apply for financial in need-aware schools if you can pay for your tuition without it- there are others who can take advantage of the opportunity for financial aid.

Be discouraged from applying because you're afraid you won't get aid- if you get in, you'll get the aid you need.

Force yourself to pay for all fees.

How to Waive your Application Fees

Application Fee

- a. Go to commonapp.org.
- b. Click on the “Other Resources” tab.
- c. A scroll down menu will appear.
- d. Click on the second option, “NACAC”.
- e. A .pdf file will appear. This is the document you must fill out.
- f. Fill out the form and follow the directions on how to properly submit it.

SAT and SAT Subject Test fee

- a. Go to commonapp.org.
- b. Click on the “Other Resources” tab.
- c. A scroll down menu will appear.
- d. Click on the first option, “college board”.
- e. A new window will open. This leads you to the College Board website.
- f. All the information can be found on the website, including instructions, criteria and forms.

5 Standardized tests

Score reports of standardized tests along with students' Grade Point Averages (GPAs) are two of the most critical factors used by admission departments, because the results of these tests generally indicate students' skills in various areas of study and potential in new surroundings.

The two types of standardized test-score reports extensively accepted by American Universities are the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test), administered by the Educational Testing Services (ETS), and the ACT (American College Testing), produced by ACT, inc.

The SAT

The SAT is the form of standardized test accepted and preferred by a large number of universities in America, including Penn. It is the most widely used admission test among universities in the U.S.

Registration for the test can be done online on www.collegeboard.com, via phone, or via mail. Online registration is preferred but may not be available in your country. You should check online at the CollegeBoard website well in advance of your preferred test date.

There are numerous test centers both inside and outside of North America, and the exact location of the closest test centers to you can be found on the website. The SAT is further divided into the SAT Reasoning Test (formerly the SAT I) and the SAT Subject Test (formerly the SAT II).

The SAT Reasoning Test (formerly the SAT I)

If you do not take the ACT, the SAT Reasoning Test is mandatory for all college applicants applying to the United States.

The test is administered in the first week of all months excluding the period from July to September.

The test consists of ten subsections: an Essay section (graded from 2-12), three sections of Critical Reading, three sections of Writing & Grammar, and three sections of Mathematics.

Performance on the test is calculated and divided by section scores; each section is scored on a scale from 200 to 800, and the cumulative scores range from 600 to 2400.

Registration for the test and selection of a test center can be done online via www.collegeboard.com.

The SAT Reasoning Test requires a one-time registration fee of \$45, although additional fees are charged when changing the test format/date/center.

The test runs for about 4 hours and 30 minutes. Although the actual timed sections add up to a time of 3 hours and 45 minutes, instructions and breaks increase the actual test time.

The SAT Subject Tests (formerly the SAT II)

If you do not take the ACT, SAT Subject Tests are optional for college applicants applying to colleges and universities in the United States.

Generally, universities require at least 2 subject tests. However, some universities require 3.

According to Penn's admissions website, 'Penn requires either the SAT Reasoning Test and two SAT Subject Tests OR the ACT with Writing. No preference is given to either test.'

Most schools have their own unique requirements regarding the SAT Subject Tests. Check to confirm which tests you need to take before you register to take your exam.

The test is designed to assess the knowledge that students have gained in various academic subjects.

It is administered in the first week of every month excluding the period from July to September, although the type of subject tests offered each month may differ.

Make sure that the subject test you are preparing to take will be offered in the month that you have registered to take your test.

You can take the SAT Subject Tests in the following areas of study:

Mathematics I	Chinese
Mathematics II	French
English Literature	Korean
World History	German
American History	Spanish
Biology (Molecular or Ecological)	Hebrew
Chemistry	Latin
Physics	Italian

Registration for the test and the selection of a test center can be done online, through www.collegeboard.com. This is not available in all countries; you should check that you will be able to register online in advance of your registration deadline.

Registration for SAT Subject Test(s) requires the payment of a one-time registration fee of \$20, although additional fees are charged when changing test format/date/center. Each additional subject test taken on the same date requires an additional \$9.

Each test runs for approximately one hour, which means that a student can write up to three SAT II tests on any given test date. However, taking both the SAT Reasoning Test and any SAT Subject Test(s) on the same date is not possible.

The ACT

The ACT is a type of admissions test that can be used instead of the SAT Reasoning Test and SAT Subject Tests. However, many universities do not accept the ACT alone.

There are few ACT test sites outside of North America. A list of test centers can be found at www.ACT.org.

Taking only the ACT instead of the SAT Reasoning Test and SAT Subject Tests is possible, but many students are advised to take at least one SAT Subject Test to complement the ACT.

The ACT tests students' skills in four areas of study:

- Mathematics
- Science
- English Grammar
Critical Reasoning/Reading
- Writing Section (Optional)

Each section's score range is from 1 – 36, and a 'composite score' is the average of the four sections of the test.

An additional Writing section can be requested in advance, in which there is a written essay graded on a scale of 2 to 12.

While the Writing Section is optional for most universities, most prefer candidates to complete the ACT with the Writing Section.

The Registration fee for the basic ACT test is \$31, and the fee for the ACT with the additional Writing Section is \$46.

Registration can be done online at www.ACT.org.



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For additional information and latest statistics, please visit www.collegeboard.com or www.act.org.

You can also check out Penn's admission page at <http://www.admissions.upenn.edu/>.



Questions?

How important are these Standardized Tests in the Application Process?

Weight placed on Standardized tests in the application process has been decreasing over the years, but they are still important to applications.

Since the majority of applicants to Ivy-level institutions have high ACT and SAT scores, Penn and other Ivy League universities also place a great emphasis on Grade Point Average (GPA).

What should be my target score?

There is no 'safe' score that will guarantee admission.

Even those in the range of 2300 - 2400 can get rejected if not their scores are not supported by a high GPA, strong extracurricular activities, evidence of leadership roles, significant volunteer experience, high quality letters of recommendation, and many other factors.

It is recommended to have SAT or ACT scores above the 75% percentile of the specific college.

However, do not disqualify yourself from applying to a school based on SAT or ACT scores alone. There are several factors that determine an application decision, and it is never based solely on standardized test scores.

At Penn, 75% of accepted students had SAT scores greater than 2000 and ACT scores greater than 31.

However, at Penn, SAT and ACT scores are weighted very differently for international students and may play a very small role on the effect of an admissions decision.

The TOEFL

Most universities, including Penn, require that students whose native language is not English (or have not attended a high school taught primarily in English) take the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), administered by the College Entrance Examination Board.

High scores on the Critical Reading section of the SAT Reasoning Test can exempt a student from the TOEFL requirement.

The TOEFL is offered 30-40 times each year at many different locations worldwide. Registration can be done online at www.ets.org/toefl, by phone, via mail, or in person at a TOEFL resource center.

Students can register for either the Paper Based Test (PBT) or the Internet Based Test (iBT) depending on which is offered at their test center.

In addition to the free sample questions on the TOEFL website, students can prepare for the test using a wide range of books and online resources. Suggested books and websites are listed on the TOEFL website: www.ets.org/toefl/.

The Paper Based Test (PBT)

Registration for the PBT costs \$160.

The PBT consists of a Listening Comprehension section (50 questions), a Structure and Written Expression section (40 questions), a Reading Comprehension section (50 questions) and a Writing test on one topic.

The Internet Based Test (iBT)

Registration for the iBT varies by country, and the exact registration fee for a particular country can be checked online at www.ets.org/toefl.

The iBT consists of a Reading section of 36-70 questions (0-30 points), a Listening section of 34-51 questions (0-30 points), a Speaking section of 6 tasks (0-4 points converted to a 0-30 scale) and 2 writing tasks (0-5 points converted to a 0-30 scale).

In Summary...

	SAT Reasoning Test	SAT Subject Tests	ACT	TOEFL
Required?	Yes, if the ACT was not taken.	Usually required, but optional at some colleges.	May be taken instead of the SAT Reasoning Test and the SAT Subject Test(s)	Required by students whose native language is not English, or who have not attended a high school taught mainly in English.
Areas Tested	Critical Reading, Writing and Grammar, Mathematics	See above for complete list of subjects, or check online at www.collegeboard.com .	Mathematics, Science, English Grammar, Critical Reasoning	Listening, Reading, Writing, Speaking (speaking only on iBT)
Registration	www.collegeboard.com	www.collegeboard.com	www.ACT.org	www.ets.org/toefl
Test Dates	First week of all months except July to September	First week of all months except July to September	See website for latest information.	See website for latest information

6 Essays & personal statements

The application essay/personal statement is usually considered to be the most important part of your application, apart from your academic record.

Sometimes, your essay will be the decision-making factor between acceptance and rejection.

Put time into writing your essay and you won't regret it.

Your goal should be to write an essay that is not explicitly about you but that shows what kind of person you are.

➤ 10 Easy Steps to Writing a College Essay

1 Think about who you are

Make a list of your character strengths. Write down what you are especially good at/passionate about.

2 Brainstorm for ideas

Do you have any life-changing experience that could help show what kind of person you are? Do you have any particular hobby? Have you ever met someone who really changed you? Or have you just enjoyed going shopping with your sister last week?

Picking a topic is a very important part of writing an essay. It is also just as important to show how you can twist it around in order to show who you are. Your topic does not have to sound extraordinary. In the end, the only thing you have to do is capture the reader's attention and show that you are different - that you are YOU and no one else.

3 Think about the structure of your essay

Make sure that you know what each paragraph is about. You should know how you are going to organize your essay even before you start writing it.

4 Make a first draft

Finally, you can start writing your essay. Use your work from steps one to three to help you out! It is a good idea to use an active voice when writing.

5 Revise your first draft

Read your essay aloud. Make sure that everything makes sense and that you were able to capture the reader's attention as well as well show who you are.

If you think you haven't succeeded in meeting these goals, you can always go back to steps one through three and edit your draft. Do that as many times as you need to, until you are satisfied with your essay.

6 Get another opinion

It is always a good idea to hear other people's opinion on your work. It will help you "think outside the box" and gain a new perspective.

7 Step away from the essay

Now that you've made another revision, don't read your essay for at least a week. This is a very important thing to do and it is also one of the reasons why you really should start early. Many students run out of time and don't have chance to have their essays rest for a while.

Letting your essay rest gives you the opportunity to look at it from a different angle and spot mistakes you might have missed before.

8 Make final revisions

After a week, you should be able to see your essay from a new perspective. Make sure that everything is well organized and that you truly haven't missed anything. You might also want to add a title and/or a first sentence that will immediately grasp the reader's attention.

9 Proofread!

Very important! Your essay is typically going to be only around 500 words long. Even one mistake seems like a lot for one page. Therefore, check your grammar, use rich vocabulary, and look for any spelling mistakes..

10 Proofread!

Again!



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The more people you ask to read your essay, the better! It can sometimes be hard to share something so personal with others, but the feedback will help a lot

7 Recommendation letters

One of the most important decisions you will have to make when writing your college application is selecting which teachers you want to write your recommendation letters.

These teachers will be your academic advocates and what they write will have a great impact on your application.

Although most teachers know the importance of their recommendations and will try to make your application look good, it is important to carefully consider who you ask to write your recommendation letters.

➤ Choosing the Right Teacher

If you do not already have a few teachers with which you have good rapport, it is wise to start early and make sure you have some by the time the application is due.

Let teachers get to know you by talking to them and getting involved in school activities.

Actively participate and perform well in class.

Join groups and organizations in your school or volunteer- you will not only get a more impressive resume but also improve your relations with the school and its staff.

Do

Find teachers that will make your application stand out from all the others.

Choose someone that knows you well, preferably also from outside the classroom, and likes you. This will make it easier for your teacher to write an interesting letter.

Don't

Choose teachers who do not know you very well. Despite their best intentions, they tend to write more generic and superficial letters, which will undoubtedly weaken your application.

You should also take into consideration previous experience with writing recommendation letters and proficiency in English language when making your decision.

A teacher with extensive experience in writing recommendation letters knows more about how to write a letter that will impress admission officers than one with less experience.

Before you ask a teacher you may want to do investigate and find out who will make your application look the best.

Although you are allowed to have recommendation letters professionally translated to English, finding a teacher comfortable with the language will make your job easier.

Good command of English will also enable the teacher to present you better.

The application will also ask you to get a reference from your high school counselor or another school official. While you are offered some flexibility in choosing which official to do this, your choice is more limited than for the teacher references.

It is therefore important to actively make use of your schools education advising service when planning the application so that your counselor will know you well when writing his or her recommendation.

When you have finally decided who you would like to write your recommendations, remember to be polite!

Most schools leave it to the individual teachers to accept or refuse such requests at their discretion. If your first choice is not willing to write you a letter, you must accept the decision and choose another.

Make sure you inform your teachers of any specific instructions and provide them with the required forms and stamped and addressed envelopes to mail the letter to the schools you are applying to.



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When your teachers and counselor have written and mailed their recommendation letters, it is essential that you show them your gratitude. You should therefore give everybody who has been involved in helping with your application a small gift as well as a thank you card to show that you appreciate the work they have done for you.

8 Transcripts

A transcript shows anyone who reads your application what you learnt in high school and what grades you received per class. Sometimes, a transcript will also list extracurricular activities.

▶ What a transcript should contain

INFORMATION

- Name of student
- School name, address, and phone number

ACADEMIC

- List courses by year such as English 1, Algebra, Biology, etc...
- Honors [if applicable]
- Grades (either letter or numeric)
- List semester grades and end of year totals
- GPA [grade point average]
- Credits, list per semester and cumulative
- Grade Scale
- PSAT/SAT scores and/or ACT scores as well as any state proficiency exams [if any]
- Graduation date

Transcripts must include grades from 9-12 when applying to college.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The transcript can also include these items.

- Course descriptions
- Extracurricular activities
- Accomplishments, awards, leadership
- Number of people in a class, and
- Average grade of the class.



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To view a sample transcript, and for more detailed instructions, go to <http://tinyurl.com/transcripthelp>

Sample Transcript

HIGH SCHOOL TRANSCRIPT SAMPLE

Name: Jane Doe
 Address: 2306 Avery Lane
 Big Town, State, Zip

Gender: F Birth Date: 01/04/1986

School Name: Avery Academy
 Phone: 111-222-3333

Graduation Date: 5/2003
 Person to Contact: Dad or Mom's Name

Grade	Year	Course Title	1 st Semester		2 nd Semester		Final		Yearly Cumulative Totals	
			Grade	Credit	Grade	Credit	Grade	Credit	Credits	GPA
9	01-02	Algebra I	B	0.50	B	0.50	B	1.0	6.5	3.2
		Geography	B	0.50	B	0.50	B	1.0		
		Grammar & Composition I	A	0.25	A	0.25	A	0.5		
		Literature I	A	0.25	A	0.25	A	0.5		
		Biology I	C	0.50	A	0.50	B	1.0		
		Biology I Lab	B	0.25	B	0.25	B	0.5		
		PE	A	0.25	B	0.25	A	0.5		
		Health	B	0.25	B	0.25	B	0.5		
		Art I	B	0.50	B	0.50	B	1.0		
10										
11										
12										

Credits and Grading Scale: A 90-100; B 80-89; C 70-79; D 60- 69; F below 60

Weight for one-credit courses (120 hours): A=4; B=3; C=2; D=1; F=0 AP Courses: A=5; B=4; C=3

Activities: Library Volunteer, DAR Member, Art Guild Member, Museum Volunteer

ACT Score ___ date _____ SAT Score ___ date _____

Signed: Your signature here

Date: write date here

9 Resumes and personal accomplishment profiles

Resumes

Why write a resume?

When asking for a teacher to write a recommendation letter, a resume and/or a personal accomplishment sheet is a must.

While your teacher may know you and your performance in his/her class, he/she does not know about all the other stuff you do, both academically and outside of the classroom.

A good recommendation is much, much more than just a confirmation from your teacher that you're a good student – that's what your grades and your SAT scores are for.

The point of a recommendation letter is so that colleges like Penn can get to know you more as a whole person, from a teacher's point of view, not just from what your grades say. Colleges like Penn love well-rounded, balanced individuals.

So it is up to you to do all that you can to help your teacher(s) write a recommendation that will highlight all of your strengths and accurately reflect all that you have worked so hard for. One great way to help your teacher is a resume.

Resumes are...

- concise and to-the-point
- very straight-forward
- easy to make.

Before you begin...

List your work experience, volunteer experience, extracurricular activities, or any other categories of activities that you may involved in.

Instead of writing page long lists, remember to pick a few key items under each category, and give a very brief description of each in point form.

For the short bullet notes beneath each activity, write down one or two key points you want to get across about that particular activity, and leave it at that..

The Do's & Don'ts of Resume Writing

Do

Make your resume short and sweet; use a bulleted style to make your resume reader-friendly.

List your jobs/activities in reverse chronological order.

Elaborate on what you have developed over the experiences you listed.

Focus on accomplishments rather than fancy job titles.

Proofread carefully.

Very hard to keep your resume to one page in length.

Keep your resume as legible as possible; fancy colours and fonts shouldn't interfere with readability.

Emphasize your name and contact information at the top of your resume.

Remember to either staple separate pages of your resume together or do double-side printing if it exceeds one page.

Don't

Lie in your resume

Use personal pronouns (I, my, me)

List irrelevant information in your resume

Include middle or elementary school experiences

Be repetitive

Forget to proofread!



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A crowded resume is very hard to read! don't include anything that isn't necessary.

Resume Formatting Sample

FULL NAME

POSTAL ADDRESS: permanent postal address

HOME PHONE NUMBER: phone number with international area code

CELL PHONE NUMBER: cell phone number with international area code

EMAIL ADDRESS: email@address.com

EDUCATION

Name of High School(s) and Years attended

- Candidate for IB/A-LEVEL/AP Certificate, Year expected
Courses: List of the courses you are currently taking
- Recipient of IGCSE/other certificate (if applicable)
Courses: List of the courses taken at that level, with grades in parentheses (History (C), Literature (B), etc.)

HONOURS AND DISTINCTIONS/ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

- List of any/all academic awards received during high school, and years awarded

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- List of any/all extracurricular activities, titles held/duties per activity, brief explanation of duties and activity, and years of participation
- Include sports, creative arts, and any other relevant extra-curricular activities.

VOLUNTEER WORK/COMMUNITY SERVICE

- List of any relevant volunteer work, titles held/duties per activity, brief explanation of duties, and years of participation.

WORK EXPERIENCE

- List of any relevant work experience, title held, brief explanation of duties, and years of participation

SKILLS

- List of any/all unique skills and a brief statement about proficiency, separated by category (Computer skills, languages spoken, etc.).

PERSONAL

- Any relevant personal information that is unseen elsewhere in your application (interests, hobbies, etc.), and will strengthen your application.

Resume Sample

Amanda Student

P.O. BOX 4839, Arlington, Virginia

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Education

Arlington High School, Virginia (2002 – 2006)

-Candidate for International Baccalaureate, expected in May 2006

-Courses: Spanish (SL), Chemistry (SL), History (SL), Mathematics (HL), Physics (HL), Economics (HL), Theory of Knowledge

-Recipient of University of Cambridge (UK) IGCSE Ordinary Level Certificate, 2002

-Courses: Spanish (A*), English Language (A), English Literature (A), Physics (A), Mathematics (A), Economics (B), Chemistry (B), Geography (B), History (C)

Academic Achievements

Arlington High School Academic Honor Roll, Grade 11, 2005

-Placed in the top 15% of students in Grade 11 for the 2005 academic year

Arlington High School Spanish Prize, 2005

-Received the first-place prize for achievement in Spanish for the 2005 academic year

Extracurricular Activities

President of the Arlington High Spanish Club, 2005-2006

-Responsible for the organization of events for the school Spanish language club, heading an executive body of 5 students

Active participant in Model United Nations (MUN), 2003-2004

-Chair of the General Assembly 1 Committee for Arlington High Model United Nations (AHMUN) 2004

- Responsible for regulating debate within the committee

-Delegate at AHMUN 2003 in the General Assembly

-Participated in debate, representing the country of Haiti

Volunteer Work

Volunteer for Virginia Charity Association, 2002-2006

-Assists in weekly soup kitchens and food drives for the homeless and disadvantaged

Work Experience

Junior Sales Associate, The Retail Store, 2005

- Responsible for maintaining and restocking inventory and providing customer service

Skills

-Languages Spoken

-English: moderately proficient

-Spanish: extremely proficient

-Computer Skills

-Extremely proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, and Internet

Personal Accomplishment Profiles

While resumes tend to be more job-oriented, a Personal Accomplishments Profile is extremely useful. What is that, you ask? Well, it's much simpler than it sounds.

A personal accomplishments profile is just a chart that organizes all the activities that you do outside of class, your awards, and any of your other accomplishments all in one concise page.

A personal accomplishments profile...

Allows you to customize the activity categories however you want.

Has room for a description of the number of hours you've spent on each so that you can show your teacher just how much time and effort you've given each of your activities.

Also has room for any further notes where you can give a more detailed description.

The Do's & Don'ts of Personal Accomplishment Profiles

Do

Find teachers that will make your application stand out from all the others.

Choose someone that knows you well, preferably also from outside the classroom, and likes you. This will make it easier for your teacher to write an interesting letter.

Don't

Choose teachers who do not know you very well. Despite their best intentions, they tend to write more generic and superficial letters, which will undoubtedly weaken your application.

To summarize...

To help your teacher write the best recommendation ever for you, all you have to do is give them your resume and your personal accomplishments profile.

The personal accomplishments profile goes into more detail about each activity in case your teacher wants to describe a particular activity that you do.

These sheets of paper will help your teacher to write a better recommendation for you, and thus you'll increase your chances of getting into your dream college that much higher.

10 Financial aid

Financial Aid at the University of Pennsylvania

Penn's financial aid policies

Penn offers need-based assistance to admitted students who require financial support to afford Penn. Applications of citizens or permanent residents of the United States, Canada, and Mexico are reviewed on a need-blind basis, meaning financial need will not affect admissions decisions.

This year, Penn has committed over 6 million US dollars in support of undergraduate international aid to support citizens of other countries. Because Penn is not need-blind for international students, Penn recommends that candidates who can afford their entire university costs not apply for financial aid.

So...does Penn prefer some countries over others?

Penn's Student Financial Services pay little or no attention about where you are from or what racial background you have.

All International Financial Aid is drawn from the same pool and every international application is treated equally

Where you are from will not affect your chance of getting financial aid, even if no one from your country has ever applied to Penn before. So don't be afraid if no one from your school has come to Penn.

The only exception to this is North America: The financial aid for Canadians and Mexicans are from a separated North American Financial Aid Pool.

If I'm admitted, will Penn meet my entire aid need?

The university meets 100% of the 'demonstrated financial need'. If you are admitted as a Penn international student on financial aid, and demonstrate that you can only pay for 10% of the total costs, the university will pay for the rest.

Due to Penn's limited financial resources, if they can't cover your entire need they will not accept you, even if they would have accepted you had you been a full paying student.

So what's in this aid package?

All of Penn's financial aid packages to international students are loan free. This means that you won't owe any money to the university once you've graduated.

Financial aid is given in the form of:

- a. Grants (ie gifts from the university, which you don't need to pay back)
- b. Scholarships
- c. 'Work-study'

As an international student at Penn, you are only allowed to work a maximum of 20 hours a week the semester and 40 hours a week during winter or summer break. You are also only allowed to work on campus.

Applying for Financial Aid

To apply for financial aid at Penn, you need to fill in the online profile called '**CSS PROFILE**'.

1. Go to the Student Financial Services' website (www.sfs.upenn.edu).
2. Look at the left hand side bar, click on 'Apply for financial aid'.
3. Click on 'Prospective Undergraduates Students,' and then click on 'International Students.'
4. Click on "CSS/PROFILE" and then follow the link to www.collegeboard.com
5. The Instructions for filling the form are then given online.



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Penn's CSS code is 2933.

Remember to convert all amounts from your local currency to US dollars.

Fill out every section thoroughly!

11 Credits

At most universities, you can get college credit or advanced standing for classes taken in certain education systems such as Advanced Placement (AP), GCE A-Level, and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses.

Advanced Placement (AP)

What is it?

The AP program is an American program administered by the College Board. It offers college level courses and exams, which allows some high-scoring students to earn college credit.

More than 30 subjects are currently offered
(<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/subjects.html>)

Students typically study take a class at school structured around the AP curriculum to prepare for the exam.

It is possible to self-study or take the exam without ever registering for an AP class offered by a high school.

Many public and private schools (as well as American international schools) participate in the AP program.

How many AP exams must I take for Penn?

None! While high scores in AP exams indicate readiness for college and academic rigor, it is by no means mandatory. Many schools in the U.S. do not offer AP courses.

You will not be penalized for not taking AP courses and/or exams.

How much credit can I get for taking AP courses?

Every university has its own policy regarding AP credits. Penn's policy can be found at <http://www.admissions.upenn.edu/applying/advanced.php>.

GCE A-Levels

The A-Level system is recognized by many universities.

For many subjects a grade of B and above is required in order to claim credits. In a few cases, a grade of C can still gain a credit. A grade of D and below is not considered.

In some cases, a credit is awarded for each component of study; AS Level and A Level. Therefore it can be possible to get more than one credit from an overall A grade in English Literature, for example.

Penn's policy on A-Level credits states that:

Students must show their original A-Level certificates to the Office of Transfer Credit and Advanced Placement (215-898-7505 or info@admissions.upenn.edu) to have their scores evaluated for credit.

To view a detailed chart that illustrates Penn's A-Level credit policy for each subject, go to <http://www.admissions.upenn.edu/applying/a-level.php>.



insider info

you will need an official copy of your certificate to claim any credits. Photocopies/faxes will not be accepted.

You will probably only be able to claim your credits after the first semester of freshman year.

International Baccalaureate (IB)

Most American universities consider the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program to be a rigorous and challenging academic program.

Penn's policy on IB credits

The University of Pennsylvania offers credit or requirement waivers to students with outstanding performance at IB examinations.

Note that it is your responsibility to make sure that the final examination scores are sent from your high school to the university in order to get credit.

To view a detailed chart that illustrates Penn's IB credit policy for each subject, go to <http://www.admissions.upenn.edu/applying/baccalaureate.php>.

12 Students speak

This guide was written by several international students just like you, and we all had that one tip we wished someone had shared with us.

Get started early. Plan ahead. Research beforehand and find out all the information you can. Those are the people who can take advantage of all the great programs, scholarship opportunities, and the ones who have the chance to perfect their application.

Julie Xu, School of Engineering & Applied Science (SEAS), Class of 2013, Canada

Start your applications early. Decide on the schools you want to apply to and write your applications the summer before they are due. All you have to do after that is keep modifying them throughout the school year.

Razeen Jivani, Wharton School, Class of 2013, Tanzania

Know what you want. You are going to be far away - make sure not to choose a school just because it is a great school. Success is not happiness.

Barbora Podzimkova, Wharton School, Class of 2013, Czech Republic

Don't be afraid to ask for help, especially with your essay. An essay can make or break your application, and it really is important that you have as many people read it as possible.

Nana Adwoa Sey, The College of Arts & Sciences, Class of 2013, Ghana

Read through the application requirements carefully and make sure you submit everything on time.

Sebastian Rossavik, Wharton School, Class of 2013, Norway

www.aisupenn.org