



BROMSGROVE
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL
THAILAND

UNIVERSITY GUIDANCE HANDBOOK

Choosing a university is an extremely important decision that you and your family will have been thinking about for some time as it is likely to impact your future career path and also success over the coming years.

All students in Year 13 make their university applications in the first part of the academic year so it is important that you start thinking about the choices that are ahead of you as soon as possible. With this in mind, we have prepared this document to help you consider the key factors and the process of applying to different countries throughout the world.

Your parents will play an important part in your decision process as normally they will pay the fees and expenses that are involved in your education. It is important that you talk to your parents about your HE aspirations. It is also important that you think about the sort of subject areas that you would like to go into, although some countries will not expect you to specialise in your first year (e.g. the American system), other countries' expectations are much different (eg the UK).

You should ask yourself the following questions:

Do I want to go to a new country?

What will my life be like in a new country?

What are my self-motivation levels like?

Why am I interested in a subject or specific area?

What are my strengths?(both academically and extra curricular)

General Advice

- 1. Plan ahead and act early:** many Universities and Colleges will look favourably at early applications.
- 2. Select carefully:** remember that each country's admission process will mean that you can apply for more than one University or College.
- 3. Choose wisely:** each institution will be able to see what course you have applied for. They may not take your application seriously if you apply for courses across numerous different subject areas. (e.g. applying for both Biomedical Science and Fine Art)
- 4. Make a good match:** choose somewhere that fits you as a student and for your interests outside of studying. It is also important to pick somewhere that has courses that meet your target grades at the end of your A Level study.
- 5. Meet all your deadlines:** remember that Oxbridge in the UK, Medicine, Veterinary and Dental Sciences all have a deadline of October 15th. If you are applying for Early Decision through the Common App for America, there is also a similar deadline.
- 6. Register for any extra examinations that you have to do well ahead of time:** centres for SATs and UKCAT will fill up quickly. Make sure you sit your IELTS in good time. Bromsgrove International School Thailand is a registered centre for BMAT, but you will need to apply ahead of schedule.
- 7. Request your transcript and recommendation letters:** ensure that this is completed in good time because it will take the school up to one week to prepare these documents.

Applying to the UK

The UK is extremely attractive for a number of reasons; not least because of the rich heritage and strong reputation of many UK universities. It is also renowned for the wide range of unique and specialist courses on offer. If you are applying to the UK, it is important that you have carefully researched the requirements for your course, the cost involved, visa requirements and also any 'cap' that they may have on international students.

How does UCAS work?

The UK operates a central system called UCAS: The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service. This works as a central hub to manage all applications for University, medical colleges and HE via the UCAS Apply website. Bromsgrove International School Thailand will work with students who create their own profile on the UCAS website, filling in a single and user friendly form which UCAS then redirect to the relevant colleges. The universities also advise UCAS of their decisions so the whole process is really simple to track for both students and Mr Williams.

The application process begins as early as August and closes in early January. However, students are advised to apply early as admissions tutors get very busy towards the end of the process. We advise all of our students at Bromsgrove International School Thailand to complete the UCAS application process by mid-November. Students will work to fill in their UCAS forms from August of Year 13 via the UCAS Apply system. In order to complete this, they need all their external examination certificates verified by Mr Williams.

Choosing the right course for you

It is really important that you choose the right course for you: remember to play to your strengths and select a subject area that you enjoy as this will be something that you are focusing on for the next three years and maybe even longer! Make sure that you research what the course at each university includes. Subjects can differ vastly from one institution to another and different Professors will have different specialisms within the field that you are selecting. The same can be said of the structure of the course, for example, is there the opportunity to study abroad? Is it possible to change subjects within electives?

Make sure to explore the amount of contact hours that the course requires for each student. The same must be said of lecture and seminar sizes, personal tutors, examinations vs coursework as this can all have a bearing on your experience. Make sure you get the right fit for you. You know what your preferred learning style is and how you will get the best experience. If you want to know more then ask lots of questions! Ask your teachers at Bromsgrove, do independent research, attend as many of the University Fairs that Bangkok has to offer as you can and also email admissions tutors and subject coordinators.

Where do you want to be? You will have a much different experience if you are studying in a vibrant city such as Manchester, Leeds or London than if you study on a campus which is a distance from the nearest town. Make sure you are aware of the accommodation, facilities, and experience on offer. What is the cost that will be incurred for the differing institutions that you are applying to? Where is the nearest airport? How far is the nearest shopping Mall? Your social experience is almost as important as your educational one!

Remember that staff at Bromsgrove International School Thailand have a wide range of experience, both of attending UK Universities and also coaching students through the process. We are a great source of information! If there is an Alumni student who is currently attending an institution that you are considering, or a subject area that you are interested in, then you can always call on their experience and ask questions to help further guide you.

The UCAS form - Filling it in correctly

The UCAS form is fairly straightforward, however there are some questions and sections that require specific details and this section will help you to get it right from the start!

- You must ensure that all of your personal details, including name, date of birth (DOB), address, nationality and contact information are fully accurate.
- You are required to list all of your iGCSE subjects, not just the A* to C and 1 to 5 grades
- You must make sure that the date that you sat the examination is accurate.
- Make sure that you enter the correct qualification for any dual award examinations that you have taken.
- Any exams that you are due to sit in your final year should be listed as 'Pending'
- Make sure that you enter the BTEC information correctly. Your qualification is a 'BTEC Subsidiary Level 3 Diploma' and then the individual subject.
- You should include any ABRSM qualifications that you have taken, even if they are outside of school.
- When you are entering your University choices and courses, please make sure that you pay careful attention to both the campus code, and the course code. Some institutions offer similar courses at different locations.



The Process - from Application to Acceptance

Students begin to write their personal statement in Term 2 of Year 12 and this document can then be amended and altered to apply to a range of Universities and Colleges across the world. After they have filled in the online application form, they click send and it will automatically be sent to Mr Williams. All the details will be cross checked and their reference will be uploaded. All of the teachers that have taught you, and got to know you during your time at Bromsgrove International School Thailand contribute to the reference. It is then written by Mr Williams.

Once the form is submitted, students can breathe a sigh of relief and have to patiently wait for the Universities to respond to UCAS. Some can be fairly fast in responding, but they do have a deadline of mid-May so do not lose heart if you hear no news immediately.

Offers are made conditionally on your A Level predicted grades and BTEC qualifications and some universities will ask for specific grades in specific subjects, and some may require an overall point score using the UCAS Tariff points. If you unsure about any offers you receive, you will always be able to contact the relevant Admissions tutor for the course.

From any offers that you receive, you will need to select two choices: a firm acceptance and an insurance acceptance. The firm choice is the place that you really want to go to and your insurance is your second choice, which normally has a lower grade offer. This is a backup in case you do not make the requirements of your first choice.

When results are released, you can go to UCAS Apply to see if you have been accepted. If you have just missed the offer from your first choice (firm acceptance), you may still be accepted to that institution. If you have received no offers, or met no offers you will be eligible to enter the 'Clearing' system. This is rare for Bromsgrove students but more information is available for this should individual students require this service as it is a very individualised process.

Useful websites

www.ucas.ac.uk

is your first port of call for UK university applications at the very start of Year 13.

www.ucas.com/students/choosingcourses/admissions/

is a link to information on relevant tests that may be required.

www.educationuk.org

is a helpful website specifically for international students.

The Personal Statement

At Bromsgrove International School Thailand we give you careful guidance and feedback about your personal statement for UCAS, but remember that it is important that YOU write the statement. For UCAS, the personal statement must be 4000 characters (including spaces) so it is a good idea to keep saving it in the UCAS application framework to ensure that your statement is the right format and length.

There are a number of people who will look at your statement throughout the process including your tutor, relevant subject teachers and Mr Williams. There are timetabled guidance sessions every week of which a number will be used for general group personal statement guidance as well as individual appointments with students to work on personal statements. As a guideline, if you are applying to Oxbridge or Medicinal sciences you should aim for the statement to largely be a reflection of your academic studies; approximately 80%. For other courses, you are more free to discuss your wider experiences during the Sixth Form as well as your academic studies.

Remember that the Admissions Tutor will want to see that you possess a passion for the subject for which you are applying. What are the reasons that you want to apply? What has inspired you at A Level to choose this course at University? What skills have you developed that you are sure will help you in the future? It is a good idea to reflect upon any Service work or work experience that you have done, if it is relevant to your future study. The University will also want to know about what kind of person you are, including what hobbies and personal interests that you have both inside and outside of school. Remember that the Universities receive thousands of these: make yourself stand out!



The USA - The Common Application (the Common App)

If you decide to apply to a university in America (and there are thousands of great colleges to choose from!) then a similar process is followed. Students apply through 'The Common App' which is a similar method to UCAS. Careful guidance is given with regards to Universities, location and course. As a general rule, here are the main differences:

- Students do not write a personal statement, instead they write a number of essays. Different colleges have different essays which relate to their subject choices.
- Not all US universities require SAT scores, but some do. Be sure to do your research well ahead of time to ensure that you can sit the relevant SAT in a timely manner if required for your chosen university.
- An overall 'Guidance reference' is required and then normally two other subject teachers, however, all requests should come through Mr Williams. You must ensure that this is done well in advance of the deadlines as it will take up to one week for references to be written.
- Make sure that you understand the specific rules with regard to 'Early Decision' (closing date 15th November) as different colleges will have different expectations of you, these may sometimes be financial.
- Make sure you have a breadth of experience throughout your Sixth Form as many US universities will take into account your sporting and extra-curricular experiences.

Australian & Canadian Applications

Australia and Canada do not have central application systems, but rather you apply individually through state clearance systems. This means that you may need to make numerous applications if you are applying to separate states.

For Australia, you do not apply until the November after you have finished your Year 13 examinations. However, you must ensure that your application is complete when you are in Year 13 so that the school can fully help you. Some states in Australia require specific English qualifications so make sure that you have fully researched this and that your A Level studies will allow you to meet the different entry requirements.

The rest of the world!

We recognise that our students will apply to universities all over the world from Hong Kong to Germany! As with all countries, students carefully research the processes required for each specific application method and are carefully guided through the process. Students must make sure that they keep Mr Williams up to date with relevant applications to ensure that they can be guided accordingly.

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