



OVERSEAS ASSOCIATION FOR  
COLLEGE ADMISSION COUNSELING

# OVERSEAS REGIONAL INSTITUTE

China 2015

August 17-18, 2015



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# Overview of Holistic Applications

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# What is meant by a “Holistic Application”

- An *Art* rather than a *Science*
- Admissions officers place emphasis on the applicant as a whole person, not just his or her academic achievements, so soft factors may be given just as much consideration as the empirical data present in hard factors.



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# Preparing for the Application

- Begin in next to last year of secondary school
- Group meeting with students only—then meet with students and parents
- Annual meeting with teachers and other school staff
- Planning Calendar for students, parents and school staff



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# THE COMMON APPLICATION

For Undergraduate College Admission

Most widely used application for US universities

Accepted by over 500 Universities and Colleges



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# Common Application

- Biographical Information
- Transcript of Grades and School Profile
- Essay/Supplement
- Letters of Reference
- Tests
- Interview



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# The Academic Record

- rigor of courses
- individual achievement
- letters of recommendation
- standardized testing (if required)
- other academic experiences



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# External Examinations and Internal Grades

- A transcript of grades is required. An explanation of the curriculum must be provided in the school profile (Chinese curriculum? AP curriculum? Mixed system?) if it is not clear in the transcript.
- Predicted grades are necessary for most international curricula, such as British A-levels.
- Results of any external examinations must be sent with the application if the exam has been administered, and final examination results must be provided when they become available in the summer (IB, A-level, gaokao)
- The SAT, subject tests, ACT will be required by many colleges and universities. The TOEFL or IELTS will also be required.

# The Essay

- Essays and short answer questions, when required, are designed to help us determine how the student thinks and how the student presents his or her ideas. Supplemental essays can help the student know more about the character of the institution
- There may be creative essays and academic essays
- The student should write several drafts of the college essay. The essay should reflect the writer's passions and priorities. Be concise, strive for a clear, comfortable writing style



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We are pleased to share the 2015-2016 Essay Prompts with you. New language appears in italics:

# ESSAY

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 failure can be fundamental to later success.* Recount an incident or time when you experienced failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you challenged a belief or idea. What prompted you to act? Would you make the same decision again?
4. *Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma-anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.*
5. Discuss an accomplishment or event, formal or informal, that marked your transition from childhood to adulthood within your culture, community, or family.



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# Activities



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## ❖ Extracurricular Activities



- Participate in activities that are meaningful.
- Commitment to an activity and consistency of involvement is more important than having a long list of activities.
- Volunteer activities are important, so be sure to include it in the application.

# Examples of Extracurricular Activities

- **Community Service**
- **Athletic Activities**
- **Olympiads**
- **Clubs and Organizations**
- **Music**
- **Theatre**
- **Dance**
- **Reading**
- **Traditional Arts**
- **Sewing**
- **Cooking**



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# Decision Plans

Early Action

Early Decision

Regular Decision

Rolling



# CASE STUDIES

- Confidential



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# Review

- How is biographical information used?
  - *Be sure that spelling of name is consistent. Advise student to use the name as it appears on a passport.*
- Why are activities important?
- Why is the student asked to write an essay? (to be discussed in detail in another session)
- What are we seeking in a counselor/school recommendation? Who completes it?
- Why do we want a school profile?
- Why are teacher recommendations important?
- What information do we seek from an interview (to be discussed in detail later)

# Help?

- Meet with students to discuss writing the college/university essay
- Review the secondary school profile
- Meet with teachers to discuss references



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# Putting a class together



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