



THINKING OF APPLYING TO A US UNIVERSITY?



Making the decision to study overseas is a major one. You need to be well prepared before starting the process. Do lots of research on the type of university/college that would suit you and your subject interests. Websites such as the ones below will give you lots of information.

<https://educationusa.state.gov/>

www.petersons.com

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org>

<https://nz.usembassy.gov/education-culture/us-educational-advising/>

<https://www.facebook.com/educationusanz/>

<http://hpsnz.org.nz/athletes/athlete-life/us-college-information>

Find out about **courses, costs, scholarships, accommodation, visas etc.** The US Embassy website (<https://nz.usembassy.gov/>) has important information that will help with visa issues.

Once you have some definite ideas about where you might be going, the next thing you need to do is to see **Mr Mackenzie** in the DP's office. He will arrange for you to get an official **transcript** of all of your results (CIE, NCEA and/or Scholarship). He will ask your house leader to provide a confidential **testimonial**. Make sure that you give teachers sufficient time to complete their part.

Most US universities use a single application system called the Common Application, (www.commonapp.org). Some use their own application process; you need to use the correct system for the place(s) you are applying to. Applications via the Common App open on **August 1**. You need to nominate Mr Mackenzie as your "**counselor**" so that your application details can be uploaded. His email address is andrew.mackenzie@macleans.school.nz You also need to select up to 3 referees. These can be teachers or can be people outside school that are involved in activities that you do. The US universities prefer that at least one referee is a teacher in an academic subject and all of them must have taught you/worked with you recently. You need to discuss your application with any potential referees and ask them politely if they will do it. They also need to be nominated via the Common App process.

You need to make sure that you complete all sections of the application. An essay of between 500-650 words is required for all applications. There are 5 topics to choose from and these will be clearly outlined on the Common App website. Allow plenty of time to prepare this essay. You can also ask your English teacher or an English teacher in your house for help.

Your personal statement is the section to show how you stand out from the rest of the candidates. As well as your school achievements, mention any outside interests, part time work, second language competency or major awards you have received.

Some universities have additional requirements that you must complete. The universities recommend that if you intend to apply for **financial aid** (scholarships), that you do this at the same time as the main application.

There are some terms that you will see in the application process. **Early Action** means that your application has to be in earlier than usual (by Nov 1), you can get an offer of a place much earlier (can be from mid Dec to Feb, depending on the university) but you don't need to make your decision until May 1. You can still apply to other colleges under regular decision plans.

Early Decision means you also have to apply early (by Nov 1). You can get an offer of a place by December but you must agree to attend this college if you get an offer. If you are offered a place you also need to withdraw any other college applications you have, both in the US and internationally. A non-refundable deposit is required. You are only allowed to apply Early Decision to one college (which must be the one you really want to go to) but you can apply to other colleges under regular decision plans.

Most applications are termed **Regular Decision**. They are due around Jan 1 (this will depend on the college), offers are made around mid-March and you have until May 1 to make a decision.

There are advantages and disadvantages to all types of applications. You need to do your research carefully and work out what best suits you. Have a look at these websites for information: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/marjorie-hansen-shaevitz/early-action-or-early-decision_b_6018582.htmlhttp://www.usnews.com/education/blogs/college-admissions-playbook/2015/09/21/ask-yourself-these-4-questions-before-you-apply-early-decision?src=usn_tw

Many universities require students to have sat the **SAT or ACT entry tests**. Macleans College is an examination centre for the SAT and other schools offer the test in Auckland. It is recommended that you sit the test at least twice. **Mrs Coventry** in Snell House is the school co-ordinator for SAT tests. See her for details.

Please note, there are some companies in Auckland that claim to guarantee you a place in a college if you apply through them. They charge fees for the service. Many colleges refuse to work with such third party representatives and this is stated clearly in their prospectuses. You could be disadvantaging yourself if you use these companies. All of the information can be found by doing your own research or seeking help at school through the Careers department. Education USA is a free service that has been set up to help NZ students through the process and they have representatives in Auckland and Wellington based in the US Consulate or Embassy. They are happy to answer any questions that the school can't.

Checklist

Key Step	Done (✓)
Research colleges	
Research visa requirements	
See Mr Mackenzie and ask for an academic transcript and testimonial Get his contact details for the Common App	
Register with the Common App website (after Aug 1)	
Nominate Mr Mackenzie as your counsellor on the Common App website	
Discuss your application with potential referees and ask if they are willing to help	
Nominate your referees on the Common App website	
Apply for financial aid with your parents' help and consent	
Find dates for the SAT in Auckland. Give yourself sufficient time to have at least two attempts.	
Fill in your part of the application – take your time, read and revise. You only get one chance to impress.	
Check that all sections of your application are finalised before the due date	