



## College Planning Guide for International Students

### 1. Research College Information

- a. On Lancaster Mennonite's Guidance Website ([www.lancastermennonite.org/academics/guidance](http://www.lancastermennonite.org/academics/guidance)), you can view the "Resource" section which has many useful websites with valuable information about College Board, TOEFL, College Searches, Financial Aid and other helpful tools in the college planning process.
- b. Meet with College Representatives that visit the campus of LMH throughout the fall semester.
- c. Visit college campuses – residence hall students will have the opportunity to attend a few organized college campus visits throughout the fall semester.
- d. Create a short list of colleges which are most suitable for you.
  - o Consider a "three-pronged" approach to creating a list:
    - o What is a dream school you would love to be accepted to?
    - o What is a school that could be a possibility in terms of receiving acceptance?
    - o What is a school(s) that you would be certain you would be accepted to?
  - o Consider the following when you are creating a list of suitable schools:
    - o Admission to selective schools is extremely competitive (example: University of Pennsylvania accepted 14% of fall 2010 freshman applications)
    - o Smaller schools tend to be more personal. Consider the selective schools for graduate-level studies.
    - o Sort your beginning list of colleges to a smaller list with realistic choices for you, rather than sending a large number of applications to schools that may not be realistic. Sending applications to four to six schools should be adequate for most students.

### 2. Take the necessary tests

- a. SAT
  - o Tests a student's knowledge of Math, Reading and Writing
  - o Should be taken at least 2 times – We suggest winter and spring of your junior year.
  - o Register at [CollegeBoard.com](http://CollegeBoard.com) for the exam – select location and date (Saturday mornings)
  - o With some colleges, a high score on the SAT Critical Reading Section could exempt a student from needing to take the TOEFL to prove English proficiency (example: PSU accepts an SAT Critical Reading Score of 530/800 in place of a TOEFL score to prove English proficiency)
  - o Ask the Guidance Office for information about SAT Prep Courses.
- b. ACT
  - o In addition or in place of the SAT – register & more information at [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)
  - o Along with English and Math sections, there is also a Science section.
- c. TOEFL
  - o Tests a student's ability to use and understand English at the university level. It evaluates how well students can combine their listening, reading, speaking and writing skills to perform academic tasks.
  - o Most colleges will want a TOEFL score for International Students and you will need to check specific colleges to find out their specific requirements. A TOEFL iBT score of 80 or higher is acceptable for most colleges.

- Register early online at [www.ets.org/toefl](http://www.ets.org/toefl) for a nearby testing location

### 3. Other College Planning Information to Consider:

- Early Decision vs Early Action
  - **Early Decision** – these plans are binding which means you will agree to attend the college if accepted. Although you can apply to only one college for early decision, applying to other colleges through the regular admission process is allowed. If you are accepted by the first-choice college early, all other applications must be withdrawn.
  - **Early Action** – Similar to early decision plans, but these are not binding. If accepted, you can choose to commit to the college immediately or wait until the spring. Under these plans, you may also apply early action to other colleges. Usually, students have until late spring to let the college know of their decision.
- School Ranking – Every ranking is someone's opinion. When someone tells you that a certain school is ranked in the top ten, be sure to ask, "Whose opinion is this?" A school that is best for one person may not be the best for someone else. A **good fit** is much more important than a ranking. Rankings can be useful if they are used as one of many tools in your college selection process.
- Always use the same form of your name as appears on your passport and **I-20** on all college application paperwork. The admissions office can assist you with transferring your I-20 to your college once your decision is made as to where you are attending.
- Consider utilizing online application processes such as **Common Application**.
- Often international applications request your parent's **financial** information – such as a bank statement. You should be prepared to obtain your parent's financial paperwork.
- Applications should be completed and submitted by **Thanksgiving** (November) of your senior year.
- Your **school counselor** can help you with your international student application – such as obtaining recommendation letters, developing an essay, requesting your transcript or other details.

### 4. Examples of College Requirements for International Students

- Penn State University
  - TOEFL – Minimum of 80 on IBT (530 on SAT Critical Reading will exempt a student from needing to take TOEFL)
  - SAT – not required if English is second language, but recommended.
- University of Pennsylvania
  - TOEFL – Required to take – scores will be examined (certain scores on the SAT Critical Reading section will exempt a student from needing to take TOEFL)
  - SAT – Students must take **both** the SAT and two SAT Subject Tests
  - Will examine all test history
- Millersville University
  - TOEFL – minimum of 65 on IBT
  - SAT – Required to take, they will examine and take the highest scores (average freshman score is approximately 1600).
- University of Pittsburgh
  - TOEFL – Minimum of 80 on IBT (600 on SAT Critical Reading will exempt a student from needing to take the TOEFL or 500 and being in an American High School for 4 years)
  - SAT – Required to take and they will examine and take the highest scores (average freshman score is approximately 1700).
- Drexel University
  - TOEFL – Minimum of 79 on IBT
  - All applicants must take at least one of the following to prove English proficiency: SAT, ACT, TOEFL or IELTS. However, International applicants with both an SAT and TOEFL score are considered more competitive candidates.