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Your 5 Steps
to U.S. Study



Application and fees

- Fees range from US\$50–\$125 per application; however, these can be waived with a letter from your school indicating financial hardship.
- Deadlines vary between universities—you should check these on each college's website.
- Make sure you explain why you are choosing *this* college in your application.

Standardized testing (PSAT, ACT, SAT or SAT subject tests)

- Tests must be taken and results released by the deadlines set by each college's admissions office.
- Tests can be taken more than once, with your best scores used.
- Most colleges will require either an SAT or ACT score, and selective colleges may require 2 or 3 SAT subject tests. There are 16 subject tests you can choose from including science, math, history and foreign language—you are best to choose your strongest areas.
- Some colleges are 'test optional' and do not use the SAT or ACT for admissions purposes; however, most do require testing results if you want to apply for academic scholarships
- PSAT is a practice test for the SAT generally held in October each year in Australia. It's best to take this in Year 10.

High school achievements

- Results from Years 9–12 are considered in the admissions process, including the academic rigor of classes and your ranking within your class.
- Other activities are very important as well, especially leadership or outstanding talent in a particular extracurricular activity and community engagement.

High school recommendations

- Generally two letters from teachers who know you well—focus on teachers who know you as a person, not just those who gave you good grades.
- A letter from your high school career practitioner (or your school's equivalent).

Essay/personal statement

- Applications have essay prompts to respond to and colleges may also set their own additional essays on a variety of topics.
- Keep essays short and interesting. Ensure they are well-written with no spelling mistakes and focus on the requested topic.
- Show who you are and what you are passionate about.
- Don't repeat information already in your application.

English language ability tests

- If English is not your native language, most U.S. colleges will ask you to take an English language proficiency test before admission. The most common tests are the Test of English as a Foreign Language ([TOEFL](#)) and the International English Language Testing System ([IELTS](#)).