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Further Reading and Resources

This section provides an overview of selective further readings and resources for those wishing to find out more about university admissions. The section also contains links to practical resources for anyone wishing to apply for an undergraduate degree in England or the United States.

United States

The individual websites of universities and colleges describe in detail what is required for applying to their institution and the financial aids available.

Good all-round introductions to college admission

There are some good general books about college admissions. Based on over a year of working in the admissions office of a liberal arts college in Northeastern United States, Mitchell Stevens describes the admissions process from an insider's perspective. Jean Fetter, originally from Wales, UK and an Oxford graduate herself, provides an insightful overview of seven years as dean of admissions at Stanford University. A more recent analysis of admissions is provided by a former admissions officer at Dartmouth College, Michele Hernandez.

Fetter, J. H. (1995). *Questions and Admissions: Reflections on 100,000 Admissions Decisions at Stanford*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Stevens, M. (2007). *Creating a Class: College Admissions and the Education of Elites*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Other general texts include Douthat's reflection on his time as an undergraduate at Harvard, the film in 500 words or less which follows four high school students through their college application process, Amy Chua's account of what it takes for an Ivy law professor 'tigermum' to start her daughters' college game early and Schoenstein's reflection on twenty-first century parenting.

Chua, A. (2011). *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*. New York: Penguin.

Douthat, R. G. (2006). *Privilege: Harvard and the Education of the Ruling Class*.

New York: Hyperion.

Schoenstein, R. (2002). *Toilet Trained for Yale: Adventures in 21st-Century Parenting*.

Boston: Da Capo Press.

The seminal book by William Bowen and Derek Bok evaluates the effects of college on students' post-graduation lives. The book looks at civic participation and well-being as part of the outcomes of college.

Bowen, W. G. and Bok, D. C. (1998). *The Shape of the River: Long-term Consequences of Considering Race in College and University Admissions*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Introductions to particular aspects of college admission

Race

Bowen, W. G. and Bok, D. C. (1998). *The Shape of the River: Long-term Consequences of Considering Race in College and University Admissions*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Written by Bowen and Bok, the former presidents of Princeton and Harvard, this book looks at what college graduates are doing with their lives decades after graduating. Graduates admitted under affirmative action policies contribute significantly to public life.

Karabel, J. (2005). *The Chosen: The Hidden History of Admission and Exclusion at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

The result of decades of scholarly and archival research, this book is a detailed overview of admissions policies and their origins at the Big Three Ivies.

Warikoo, N. K. (2016). *The Diversity Bargain: And Other Dilemmas of Race, Admissions, and Meritocracy at Elite Universities*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

This book explores how undergraduate students at elite UK and US universities think about the meaning of race and merit.

Socio-economic

Espenshade, T. J. and Radford, A. W. (2009). *No Longer Separate, Not Yet Equal: Race and Class in Elite College Admission and Campus Life*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Empirical research in this book shows that racial diversity has been increasing on US campuses. However, not all non-white groups receive beneficial special consideration in admissions. Racial diversity can also hide a lack of socio-economic diversity on campus.

Legacies

Golden, D. (2006). *The Price of Admission: How America's Ruling Class Buys Its Way into Elite Colleges – and Who Gets Left Outside the Gates*. New York: Random House.

As the title suggests, this is an investigation into the relationship between money and admissions and the idea of 'legacy admits'.

Athletics

Lincoln, C. (2004). *Playing the Game: Inside Athletic Recruiting in the Ivy League*. Chicago: Nomad Press.

This book explains how athletic recruitment and admissions work in the Ivy League.

Tier One Athletic Resources (2010). The Essential Guide to Ivy League Athletic Recruiting, available online.

This is a 'how to get recruited' guide for anyone wishing to gain admission to the Ivy League based on athletic talent.

Steinberg, J. (2002). *The Gatekeepers: Inside the Admissions Process of a Premier College*. New York: Viking.

There are several websites for those interested in athletic admission:

The National Collegiate Athletic Association can be found at <http://www.ncaa.com>.

There is also a special website for Ivy League sports – <http://www.IvyLeague.com>.

There are also two Athletic Associations that are not part of NCAA and which cater to community colleges and small private colleges respectively. The National Junior College Athletic Association can be found at <http://www.njcaa.org> and the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics is hosted at <http://www.naia.org>.

Practical resources

For those thinking about applying for undergraduate study in the United States, the admissions sections of individual institutional websites have detailed information. In addition, general resources about a range of institutions are available. Examples include the *US News* college rankings <http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-colleges>, and the *Forbes* college ranking <http://www.forbes.com/top-colleges/list/>.

The following websites offer general information and guidance on the application process:

Testing: The SAT and ACT websites offer detailed information on the tests they offer: <http://sat.collegeboard.org> and <http://www.actstudent.org>.

The Common application and Universal application websites also provide detailed information about the process of applying to US institutions: <https://www.commonapp.org> and <https://www.universalcollegeapp.com>.

NACAC: The National Association for College Admission Counseling <http://www.nacacnet.org>, an organization with nearly 13,000 professionals dedicated to serving students as they make choices about pursuing post-secondary education. The website offers extensive resources for students and parents. NACAC conducts an annual survey about the state of college admission, including factors universities and colleges consider in admissions decisions: www.nacacnet.org/soca.

College Navigator: <http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>

A resource of the US Department of Education. College Navigator gathers admission, retention, graduation and financial aid data for every college in the country.

Know How 2 Go: <http://www.knowhow2go.org/>

A public service initiative that helps middle and high school students prepare, apply and pay for college. Sponsored by The American Council on Education, the Lumina Foundation and the Ad Council.

England

Academic writing and policy reports

In England, the US genre of admissions books does not have an equivalent. The closest to this genre is Joseph Soares' book on changes at Oxford University. Perhaps it is unsurprising to learn that Soares himself is an American who briefly stayed in Oxford, England for a research visit.

Soares, J. A. (1999). *The Decline of Privilege: The Modernization of Oxford, University*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

In addition, there are two academic books that tackle social class and race in higher education:

Archer, L., Hutchings, M. and Ross, A. (2002). *Higher Education and Social Class: Issues of Exclusion and Inclusion*. London: Routledge.

Reay, D., David, M. and Ball, S. (2005). *Degrees of Choice: Social Class, Race and Gender in Higher Education*. Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books.

A lot of scholarly work in England on admission to higher education is in the form of academic journal articles which are usually only accessible freely in subscribing libraries or on a pay-per-article basis for non-subscribers. The style of these pieces can be less accessible for general readers than books; on the upside, they are based on rigorous and scholarly investigations. The topics in the English literature focus more on the students than the selectors and focus on social class, type of secondary schooling and race in admission and progression at university. Key articles here include:

Boliver, V. (2013). 'How fair is access to more prestigious UK Universities?' *British Journal of Sociology*, 64 (2): 344–64.

Hoare, A. and Johnston, R. (2011). 'Widening participation through admissions policy – a British case study of school and university performance', *Studies in Higher Education*, 36 (1): 21–41.

Linda Croxford, L. and Raffe, D. (2013). 'Differentiation and social segregation of UK higher education, 1996–2010', *Oxford Review of Education*, 39 (2): 172–92.

Ogg, T., Zimdars, A. and Heath, A. (2009). 'Schooling effects on degree performance: A comparison of the predictive validity of aptitude testing and secondary school grades at Oxford University', *British Educational Research Journal*, 35 (5): 781–80766.

The following article looks particularly at the impact of type of school and the writing of personal statements:

Jones, S. (2013). 'Ensure that you stand out from the crowd: A corpus-based analysis of personal statements according to applicants' school type', *Comparative Education Review*, 57 (3): 397–423.

Overall, key resources for finding out about admission and thinking about admission in England are policy reports, legislation and practical resources.

One key resource are the reports published by the Higher Education Funding Council for England on a range of aspects of higher education, including admission and student experiences, freely available at: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/>. The Higher Education Statistical Agency also publishes freely available reports on participation patterns in higher education <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/pis>.

In addition, the charity the Sutton Trust has a range of research report relevant to higher education admission freely available at: <http://www.suttontrust.com/research-category/university/>.

Practical resources

Applications for undergraduate study in the UK are processed through a central clearinghouse, UCAS. UCAS stands for the 'Universities and Colleges Admissions Service'. UCAS processes over 2.5 million applications every year, for some 650,000 prospective students across the UK and beyond: helping them gain access to more than 340 UK universities and colleges. wwwucas.com.

Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA) was set up after the 2004 Higher Education Review led by Steven Schwartz (<http://www.admissions-review.org.uk/>). SPA offers a number of policy and good practice guides as well as research reports. Material is freely available at www.spa.ac.uk. Of particular interest are the reports into contextual admissions www.spa.ac.uk/information/contextualdata/spasworkoncontextual/, Equitable admission for under-represented groups (with the Equality Challenge Unit), www.spa.ac.uk/support/goodpractice/equality/equitableadmissions and SPA's good practice statement of Admissions Policies 2014 www.spa.ac.uk/support/goodpractice/admissionspolicies.

Individual institutions maintain websites containing all relevant information for applying to their undergraduate programmes. A list of all UK universities with weblinks to the institution's homepage is available here: www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/aboutus/members/Pages/default.aspx. A list of Russell Group universities is available here www.russellgroup.ac.uk/our-universities. Those interested in applying for Oxford and Cambridge might be interested in the sample interview questions published by Oxford University: <http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/applying-to-oxford/interviews/sample-interview-questions>.

Two of the big newspapers in the UK, *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* as well as the *Guardian* publish annual 'university guides' that are popular

with prospective students, parents and university administrators. www.the-sundaytimes.co.uk/sto/University_Guide/ and www.theguardian.com/education/universityguide.

There are also consultancies operating in the admissions sector and there are commercial guidebooks. Social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook, The Student Room and Mumsnet also offer discussions regarding higher education.