
CONEXIONES

Foundation Courses

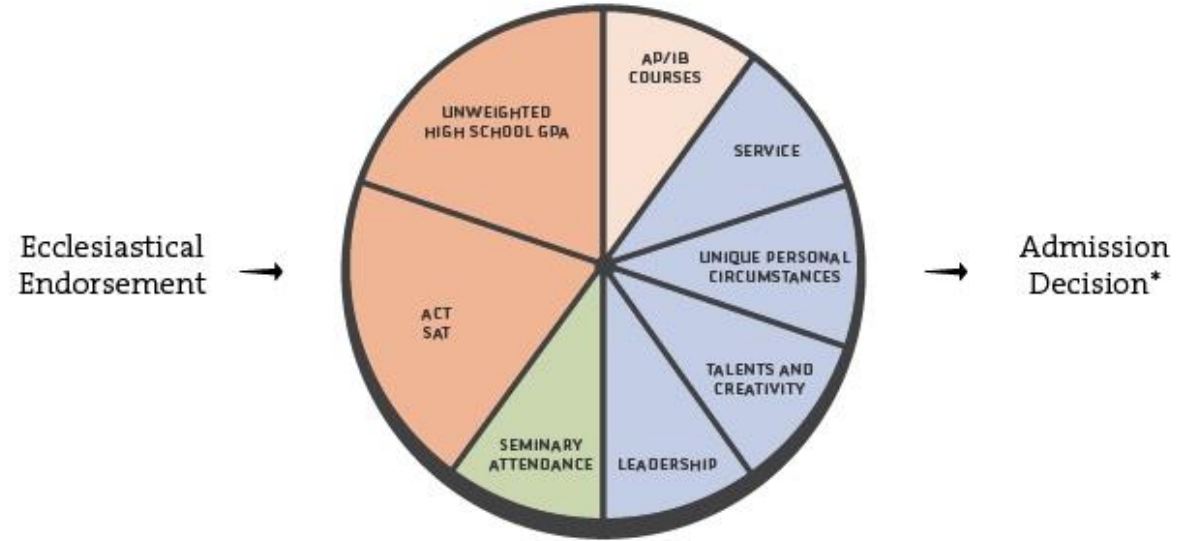
SECTION 4 – “THE APPLICATION EXPERIENCE”

Steps of the University Application Process

- **What you need to apply:**
 - *Your Transcripts*
 - *Extracurricular Activities*
 - *Written Essays*
 - *Recommendation Letters*
 - *Ecclesiastical Endorsement (only for CES schools)*
 - *Standardized Testing Scores (SAT, ACT, TOEFL, GMAT, MCAT, etc.)*
- All the above are factors affect the admissions process
- Some receive more attention than others in the admissions decision
- All are important to be a competitive candidate

Admission Criteria - BYU Example

New Freshman Comprehensive Admission Review



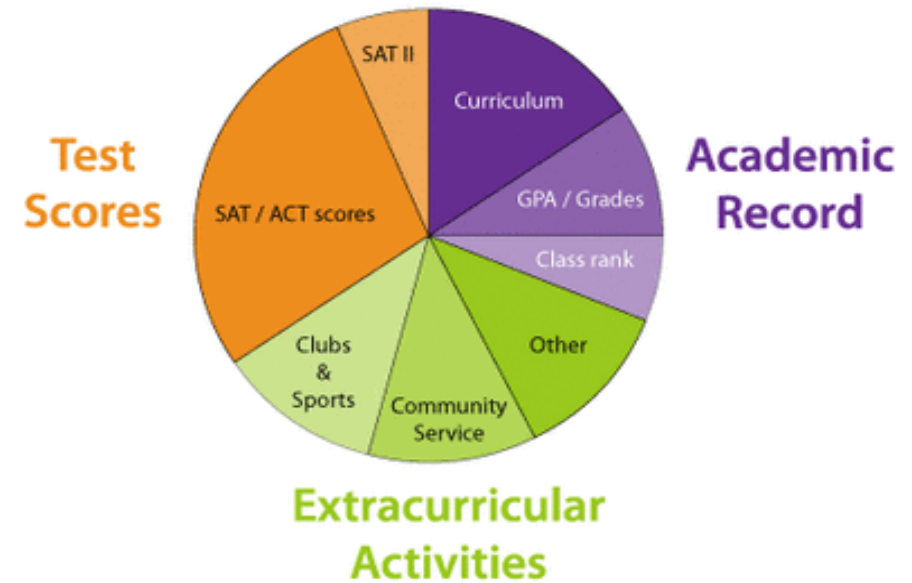
*All students who meet the summer term and fall semester application deadlines will be notified of their admission decision by February 28, 2013. Students who complete their application by the priority deadline (December 1, 2012) will receive extra consideration in the admission process and will also receive priority in the housing selection process.

General Admission Criteria:

- Varies according to school
- Visit the school website for admission criteria
- Others emphasize the GPA.

College Admissions Criteria

Admissions offices accept or reject students based on a number of criteria. This chart is a rough estimate of the weight offices put on different application sections.





Transcripts

Make sure that do your best to keep your transcripts as attractive as possible!

- Transcripts are an official record of academic work, that includes:
 - *Courses taken*
 - *Grades received*

- Grades:
 - *As we have seen before, transcripts are based on a 4-point scale. The scale uses letters. These letters are the grades that determine your grade point average. They are shown on your transcript*
 - *The GPA is important for employers, postgraduate programs and other opportunities after graduation*
 - *Transcripts are the proof of classes taken and grades received.*

- Test Results:
 - *Entrance exam scores that are important to the admissions committee.*
 - *The type of entrance exam you must take varies by university*
 - *The two main U.S. entrance exams are: 1) The ACT 2) The SAT*

Obtaining your Transcripts

- Obtaining your transcripts:
 - *Most transcripts are available from your high school*
 - *Contact your school's administrative office*
- International Evaluation
 - *The educational institution that you are applying to may require that your transcript be evaluated by World Education Services(WES).*
 - The WES's evaluation reduces the workload of admission officials.
 - The evaluation also enables officials to objectively evaluate your high school work
 - *The cost of evaluation for WES: \$100 – 300*

Transcript - Example

> AIM > Record Summary

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Sharp, Preston Tyler - [psharp94] - 54-362-3893 - 19 Apr 1994 - Male - Junior - non-employee

STUDENT INFORMATION

NAME : Sharp, Preston Tyler
BYU ID : 54-362-3893
BIRTHDATE : Apr 19 1994
GENDER : Male

DEPARTMENT : Economics
BACHELORS MAJOR : Economics
MINOR : Music
MINOR : Environmental Science

DEGREES AWARDED - BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

No degrees awarded at BYU as of June 24, 2016

BYU COURSE WORK

| TEACH AREA | CBS NO. | SEC NO. | H | COURSE DESCRIPTION | SEM HRS | GRD |
|------------|---------|---------|---|--------------------|---------|-----|
|------------|---------|---------|---|--------------------|---------|-----|

Fall Semester 2011

| | | | | | | |
|------------|-------|-----|--------|-------------------------------|------|----|
| ACC | 200 | 001 | | Principles of Accounting | 3.00 | A |
| DANCE | 100 | 015 | | Social Dance, Beginning | 0.50 | A |
| ENG T | 221 | 005 | | Foundations Global Leadership | 3.00 | A- |
| EEL A | 101 | 005 | | The Book of Mormon | 2.00 | A |
| EEL C | 130 | 005 | | Missionary Preparation | 2.00 | A |
| STAC | 141 | 004 | | Martial Arts | 0.50 | P |
| STAC | 155 | 005 | | Self-Defense | 0.50 | P |
| STDEV | 168R | 001 | | Law Lecture Series | 1.00 | A |
| TMA | 150 | 001 | | Public Speaking | 2.00 | A |
| SUM HR ERM | 15.50 | | HR GRD | 14.50 GPA | 3.90 | |

Fall Semester 2015

| | | | | | | |
|------------|-------|-----|--------|--------------------------------|------|----|
| STAC | 175 | 001 | | Beginning Scuba Diving | 0.50 | P |
| A HTG | 100 | 021 | | American Heritage | 2.00 | A |
| BUS M | 241 | 001 | | Marketing Management | 2.00 | A- |
| FIM | 201 | 002 | | Principles of Finance | 2.00 | A- |
| EEL A | 211 | 016 | | The New Testament | 2.00 | A |
| SPAN | 211 | 017 | | 3rd-Yr Span Read, Gram, & Cult | 3.00 | A |
| STDEV | 117 | 006 | | Career Exploration | 2.00 | A |
| SUM HR ERM | 16.50 | | HR GRD | 16.00 GPA | 3.89 | |

Winter Semester 2016

| | | | | | | |
|------------|-------|-----|--------|----------------------------|------|----|
| ECON | 110 | 002 | | Econ Principles & Problems | 3.00 | A- |
| PDHIO | 120 | 002 | | Science of Biology | 2.00 | A |
| EOS | 150 | 001 | | Environmental Biology | 3.00 | A |
| EEL C | 200 | 001 | | The Eternal Family | 2.00 | A |
| SOC | 112 | 001 | | Current Social Problems | 3.00 | A |
| STDEV | 272 | 001 | | Preview of Medicine | 1.00 | W |
| SUM HR ERM | 13.00 | | HR GRD | 13.00 GPA | 3.92 | |

BYU DEPARTMENTAL EXAMS

| | | | | | | |
|------------|-------|-------|--------|------------------------|------|---|
| SPAN | 105 | 20155 | | University Spanish 1 | 4.00 | A |
| SPAN | 211R | 20155 | | Spanish Conversation 3 | 2.00 | A |
| SPAN | 212R | 20155 | | Spanish Conversation 4 | 2.00 | A |
| SPAN | 106 | 20155 | | University Spanish 2 | 4.00 | A |
| SPAN | 206 | 20155 | | University Spanish 4 | 4.00 | A |
| SUM HR ERM | 16.00 | | HR GRD | 16.00 GPA | 4.00 | |

ENTRANCE EXAMS

| | | |
|-----|---------|---------|
| ACT | 02/2011 | COMP 29 |
| ACT | 11/2011 | COMP 32 |
| ACT | 04/2011 | COMP 30 |

FUTURE ENROLLMENT

Extracurricular Activities

- Activities that are not academic in nature.
 - *Sports, theater, music, debate, choir, dance, student government, chess club, political activism, etc.*
 - *Volunteer activities*
- **Why are they important?**
 - *Universities in the United State want students to participate outside of class*
 - *Committees want to see how students will contribute to the university atmosphere*
 - *Grades are necessary but are not sufficient to be a strong candidate*
 - *Participating in extracurriculars is great, LEADING others in extracurriculars is what truly helps you stand out*

Extracurricular Activities

- **Universities want to see a mix of volunteer / other activities**
 - (Volunteer) + (Other activities) = strong extracurricular profile
- **What can I do?**
 - *Be involved; participate in as many activities as possible.*
 - *Participate in volunteer activities and other activities*
 - *Find activities from a variety of sources:*
 - High School
 - Community Groups
 - Church Groups
 - Governments / local companies
 - *Do activities interest you*
 - *Look for leadership opportunities*

Written Essays

- Almost all University applications require multiple written essays
- Written essays are critical for admissions committees:
 - *Show your personality*
 - *Help admissions committees understand your story and future goals.*
- Preparing strong essays requires significant time and attention:
 - *The admission employees read hundreds of essays every day*
 - *Create a plan before writing*
 - *Written essays cannot have grammatical or vocabulary errors*
- *Your Conexiones mentor can help you prepare your written essays*

Written Essays

Essay Prompt Examples

- *What is one of the hardest things that you have done or experienced? (250 words maximum)*
- *What do you consider as the most important social issue? Why?*
- *Describe how you have demonstrated your leadership ability inside and outside of school.*
- *Describe your most significant achievements and how they relate to your future goals.*
- *Why do you want a college education?*

The Essay Outline

- **Why make an outline?**
 - *Outlines help you organize your thoughts*
 - *Before writing, you must know:*
 - Your key message
 - How you will transmit that message
 - *It is likely that you will have 200-300 words to finish the whole essay. Each word and sentence is important.*

Essays – the creation of a story

- **The creation of a “story”**

- *What do you want the committee to remember about you? What separates you from the rest?*
 - Choose something that differentiates you from the other typical applicants
- *Consider **how your essays support each other**. Do they combine to make a strong overall impression?*



- *Written essays should reflect who you are and how you see the world.*
- *As with any other story, your essays should be something that others want to read*

The Structure of the Essay

Example Outline – Bullet Points

- *Introduction*
- *First Paragraph*
 - Detail 1
 - Detail 2
- *Second Paragraph*
 - Detail 1
 - Detail 2
- *Conclusion*

Tips on Writing Strong Essays

- *Answer the question!*
- *Focus on the subject – don't explore other areas*
- *Begin with a hook*
 - Hooks grab attention
 - A hook could be a quote, a question or bold statement
- *Be sincere and intelligent.*
- *Readers like humor*

Essays: The Final Touches

- **Make corrections**

- *You, your mentors and others should revise your work*
- *Check for grammatical and spelling errors and correct complicated sentence structures.*
- *Your mentors are perfect for this: that's why we are here!*
 - We can help you refine your idea and
 - We can help make sure your written essay sets the impression you desire
- *Read your work out loud in front of a mirror*

Recommendation Letters

- **What are recommendation letters?**
 - *Small letters of support written by a mentor/boss/teacher*
 - Emphasize your personal strengths
 - Explain why you should be admitted
 - *Required by all postgraduate institutions*
 - *Required by most undergraduate institutions*
 - *Provides the committee with external evidence of who you are*

Recommendation Letters

- This is a serious favor to ask. It can make the difference between success and failure
- Choose the “right” people to recommend you
 - *Take time to think about who can write a recommendation:*
 - Who do you trust?
 - Who has a close relationship with you?
 - Who will make an effort to help you with your letter?
- Give those who will recommend you **at least 3 weeks**

Recommendation Letters

Process

1. *Once you have selected a writer, ask them in a friendly and respectful manner.*
 - Clearly explain your purpose
 - Thank them when they decide to help you.
 2. *Give them sufficient (but not too much) time to write a quality letter (3-4 weeks)*
 - If you give too much time, your writer will probably procrastinate or forget.
 3. *Explain exactly when / where to send the letter (normally the letters are sent directly to the university)*
 - Find the instructions for the letter in your application materials
 4. *Provide your writer with events/traits they might be able to include*
-
- *Be careful! It is your responsibility to be sure that your writer sends the letter on time.*
 - *Universities do not consider letters that are sent late.*

Ecclesiastical Endorsement

- If an institution requires that you have an ecclesiastical endorsement, you will be notified during the application process
- **Honor Code/Acceptance:**
 - *Certain institutions like BYU require that you follow a set of rules called an Honor Code.*
 - *You can get an **ecclesiastical endorsement** through an interview with a local leader of the church.*
 - *In the meeting you will commit to live according to the standards established by the institution of the church*
- For more information about BYU's ecclesiastical endorsement, read here: [BYU Endorsement](https://onestop.byu.edu/complete-ecclesiastical-endorsement) (https://onestop.byu.edu/complete-ecclesiastical-endorsement)

Entrance Exams

- As in many countries, the majority of American universities require that a student provide entrance exam results
- These exams help committees to evaluate each applicant in a fair way.
- **Exam List:**
 - *ACT*
 - *SAT*
 - *SAT subject tests*
 - *TOEFL*
 - *LSAT, GMAT, MCAT, DAT*

Exam Requirements for International Students

- **SAT/ACT Required by:**
 - *Universities*
- **SAT/ACT Not required by:**
 - *Adult Secondary Education*
 - *Community College*
 - *Vocational School*
- Check to see if your institution requires the ACT or the SAT. Some of them let you choose between the two
- **The TOEFL Exam** tests your English abilities. It is required by almost all programs
- **GMAT/LSAT/MCAT/GRE:** Required by postgraduate institutions.

SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test)

- Three Sections:
 - *Math (800 Points)*
 - *Critical Reading (800 Points)*
 - *Writing (800 Points)*
- Most institutions only look at the **math & critical reading** sections (1600/1600); Some institutions **take all three sections into account** (2400/2400)
- Average test taking time is approximately 4 hours.
- The exam is offered 7 times a year and costs \$55.
- When you take the SAT exam, you choose which Universities will receive your scores.
 - *Therefore, you need to know which ones you will apply for*
- You can find general information about the SAT here: [Princeton SAT Review](http://www.princetonreview.com/college/sat-information) (<http://www.princetonreview.com/college/sat-information>)
- You can find a test taking center here: [SAT Test Location](https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/register/find-test-centers) (<https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/register/find-test-centers>)

SAT

- As we said before, the SAT is generally graded based on 1600 points.
 - *Higher level institutions require 1450+*
 - *Average level institutions accept 1100 – 1400+*
 - *Lower level institutions are happy with anything and accept grades from 800 – 900.*
- Sample math question on the SAT:
- What of the following inequalities represents the possible number of cups of milk (m) and cups of juice (j) that someone 20 years of age could drink in one day to meet or exceed the daily recommended intake of calcium from these drinks?
 - *The daily recommended intake for calcium for a 20 year old is 1,000 milligrams (mg).*
 - *A cup of milk contains 299 mg of calcium and a cup of juice contains 261 mg of calcium.*

ACT (American College Test)

- The ACT has five sections:
 - *English*
 - *Math*
 - *Reading*
 - *Science*
 - *Optional Written Section.*
- Each section is graded on a scale of 0 - 36
- The average of all the sections (without the optional) = Overall Score
- Perfect Score – 36/36
- Average time: 3.5 hours
- Read more about the ACT here: [Princeton ACT Review](http://www.princetonreview.com/college/act-information)
(<http://www.princetonreview.com/college/act-information>)
- You can find testing centers here: [ACT Testing Locations](http://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/taking-the-test.html#identification)
(<http://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/taking-the-test.html#identification>)

ACT

- As we mentioned before, the ACT is generally graded on a 36 - point scale.
 - *Elite institutions usually have an average of 32 , but often accept students with lower scores*
 - *Lower level institutions are happy to accept almost all applicants and the average score is between 18-24.*
- Sample English question from the ACT exam: (only possible with the complete paragraph – not provided)

–

Which option would introduce the rest of the paragraph more effectively?

- NO CHANGE
- There seemed to be no explanation as to why mom ran the house as she did
- Our house doesn't follow a typical schedule.
- My mom ran our house in the most spectacular way

TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language)

- Grades your English abilities
- Mandatory for international students
- Cost: \$160-180 U.S. dollars
- Duration: 4 Hours
- Offered in specific testing centers in different places of almost every country

TOEFL

- Four Sections:
 - *Reading*
 - *Listening Test*
 - *Oral Test*
 - *Written Test*
- Your result should demonstrate competence in English
- Many universities require scores of at least 70%, while some universities like BYU are more demanding and require a score of 80% or more.
- This exam can be taken as many times as needed to reach the minimum competence requirements
- Find a testing center here: <https://www.ets.org/toefl/ibt/faq/>

Discipline-Specific Exams

- Only required by postgraduate institutions
- These exams are only for those who have already received a four-year degree and intend to receive a professional degree
- These tests are expensive and difficult
 - *Have in mind that if you intend to pursue one of these degrees in the United States you will have to take one of these exams*
- These exams include:
 - *LSAT (Law School)*
 - *MCAT (Medical School)*
 - *DAT (Dental School)*
 - *GMAT (Standardized test required for MBA programs)*
 - *Etc.*

Exams – How to Prepare

- Begin now! These exams are essential to be admitted to an American university. The higher your score, the more likely you'll be admitted
- There are many online courses that will help you prepare for these exams. Kaplan, La Vida, etc. They can be valuable sources to increase your score and prepare for the big test!
- Take as many practice tests as possible. They can be found in books and online.
 - *Many companies write books with tips and tricks to get a better score on these tests*
 - *These books also have various practice tests*
- Invest time and money now to prepare for exams - your sacrifice will reward you in the future!