

# **Planning for Grade 12 and Post-Secondary Study**

2011/2012



Things to think about and do this summer!

**Shawnigan Lake School  
Guidance Centre**



July 2011

Dear Students,

Welcome to Grade 12 and your final year of high school! If you haven't already started to do so, now is the time you need to begin to think seriously and carefully about life beyond the walls of Shawnigan Lake School. Exciting? Yes! A little scary? Probably so. No doubt the thought of venturing into the "real world" brings with it lots of anxieties and questions.

We hope to get you started with some of the things you need to do over the summer and a timeline for what will happen when you return in September. Remember, this is a guideline only. More detailed information will be given to you as it becomes available or is needed. We will meet with you regularly in groups and individually to help you through this process, but it's important for you to take responsibility for planning your future.

With the summer at hand, and Grade 12 looming on the horizon, we would like to leave you with a bit of homework for the holidays. Ideally students will return in September having put some thought into making tentative plans for post-secondary study. To do so in an effective way, here are some suggestions to follow.

- 1. Research, research, research!** The more time spent exploring options, the more likely you will find a post-secondary institution suited to your individual needs. Choice of programs, admission requirements, sports, residences, extra-curricular activities, size, location, etc. - any of these may be important factors in your decision. Ask around, check bookstores and libraries, search the Internet - there's lots of information out there to help you make informed decisions.
- 2. Gather information.** Most institutions are only too glad to be helpful to prospective students. If you want to find out more information about a particular field of interest, make sure to include this in your request. Many faculties have brochures specific to their programs.
- 3. Look for interesting programs.** Some universities offer programs that are unique to that institution and not available elsewhere. Do you know about Arts One at UBC? Health Information Science at UVIC? The Foundation Year at King's? Environmetrics at Guelph? Outdoor Recreation at Lakehead? These are just a few samples of programs you can investigate if you take the time to look.
- 4. Visit.** If at all possible, the very best way to get a "feel" for a school is to visit it. Printed material usually shows only the "glossy" picture and a campus visit will give you a better sense of what it is really like. Phone the university or college and ask for their Student Liaison Services. Or check their website for "visits". They will help you arrange a visit and organize a tour to see the areas you are most interested in. If it's impossible to do this in the summer, consider booking a trip at mid-term in November. **Highly recommended!** You wouldn't buy a car without checking it out - you'll spend more money on your education and at least 4 years of your life - it's worth a trip to see what you're getting for your time and money.

5. **Start a file.** Begin to collect and keep information and correspondence in an organized fashion. This is particularly important for U.S. schools where students need to have reference letters, student profiles, test scores, mid-year reports, and other miscellaneous documents submitted at various intervals. Students need to keep a record of what is due and when.

**TOEFL** (Test of English as a Foreign Language) is required at universities for students who have studied for less than 4 years in an English speaking country (a few universities will require 3 years, others 5 years). Universities set different standards and students should check what score is required. **TOEFL tests should be taken in the summer.** More information is available at [www.toefl.com](http://www.toefl.com).

**N.B:** Remember that **admission criteria and selectivity may change each year** and you may need to look beyond your first and second choice. Be prepared to plan for alternatives and look carefully at what is available for you. The choices are numerous, but it takes time and commitment to research.

### **For students applying to U.S. universities:**

Arrange summer visits to campuses if at all possible

Fine tune your list of colleges/universities

Work on your college essay using the advice and instructions you received from Mr. Kingstone at his writing workshops.

Complete a copy of the **Common Application** as a practice. Though you will do this on-line when the time comes, a paper copy allows us to go over your answers before you submit them. The questions on this application will be very similar to those on most U.S. university applications. By taking time to do this now, you'll have all the information you need later at your fingertips. Print out a form on-line at [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org).

If you are applying to the University of California system, you should print a paper copy of the application to use as a rough draft of the on-line version.

*If you have studied at another school before Shawnigan (from Grade 9), you must also arrange for an official transcript from that school to be sent to Shawnigan so we can include it with your SLS transcript. All U.S. universities need your marks from Grades 9 through 12 and will not process your application without this information. It is your responsibility to make sure this is done.*

**Register for SATs.** Students planning to take one or more of these tests in the fall should register on-line at [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org). **Note** that the November test falls over the mid-term break, so you will need to plan accordingly. This is a very busy test date, so register early. The October, December, January and June tests are available at SLS (test center #94465).

We are available to help you with your applications as much as you need, but expect you to take some initiative (see above) before you arrive back at school. At a minimum, you must have completed a draft of the Common Application (or rough copy of the UC application) before we meet.

Meet with us early in September to review what has been done and create a timeline for what needs to be completed.

Finalize the list of universities/colleges you will apply to. Begin U.S. applications early. Don't leave everything to the last minute. You are at a distinct advantage if you complete applications early and send them off well before the deadline. The stress level is high enough in the fall; don't add the panic of trying to get applications completed a couple of days before the due date.

### **UK University Information for Oxford, Cambridge, all UK medical, dental, and veterinarian programmes**

Early September-All applications to Oxford, Cambridge, all UK medical, dental, and veterinarian programmes should be well under way. This includes personal statements, reference letters from teachers, **and knowledge of what is required by each programme/university.**

September 20-If you wish to apply to Cambridge, and wish to be interviewed in Canada rather than at Cambridge, you must have applied by this date. Otherwise, all interviews are at Cambridge. All Oxford interviews are at Oxford or via Skype. Applications to certain programmes at Oxford and Cambridge (and possibly other universities and programmes) require additional materials/tests. **Make sure you are aware of these requirements.** Cambridge University requires the COPA application in addition to the UCAS application. Please read about applying to Cambridge at <http://www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/apply/>. You can download the COAF document there.

September 23-If you are applying to a medical or dental programme, certain universities require that you write the UKCAT-the UK Clinical Aptitude test. For a list of universities/programmes that require the writing of this test, and for additional details, check the UKCAT website: [www.ukcat.ac.uk](http://www.ukcat.ac.uk). **September 23 is the LAST day to apply to write this test.**

September 30-BMAT standard entry closing date. The BMAT (BioMedical Admissions Test) is used by certain universities/programmes to assess readiness to pursue programmes. The universities/programmes requiring this test are Cambridge U. medicine; Imperial College London medicine, biomedical science, pharmacology, and transitional medical science; Royal Veterinary College veterinary medicine and combined degree programme; and, UCL (University College London) medicine. Please see Mrs. Hall for registration details. The test is completed on-line at Shawnigan Lake School.

October 7-Last day of testing for the UKCAT. Please see additional information at <http://www.ukcat.ac.uk>.

October 15- All applications to Oxford, Cambridge, all UK medical, dental, and veterinarian programmes must be completed by this date.

Other programmes at UK universities have various closing dates. If you are not familiar with the UCAS website, you must become familiar with it immediately. It is very useful and has a huge amount of data and important information. The UCAS website is <http://www.ucas.com/>.

**IT IS IMPERATIVE that students planning on any of the above universities/programmes have their student statements written BEFORE September 1st, 2011. In addition, students are welcome to correspond with me by email ([leh@shawnigan.ca](mailto:leh@shawnigan.ca)) over the course of the summer! Good luck! We look forward to working with all of you in September!**

## Yearly Planner

<b>September</b>	<b>October</b>	<b>November</b>	<b>December</b>	<b>January</b>
<p>Sign up for meeting with one of us in the Guidance Office – very important!</p> <p>Register for up-coming SATs if not done in summer</p> <p>Revise applications for U.S. universities (<i>early decision</i> in particular)</p> <p>Research scholarships – <a href="http://www.studentawards.com">www.studentawards.com</a></p> <p>Be aware of deadlines.</p> <p>Ask if you're not sure!</p>	<p>Check college application deadlines</p> <p>Continue to research university and college choices – see us for help.</p> <p>Attend university liaison visits to gather current information. Most visits come to SLS in Oct/Nov</p> <p>Complete U.S. <i>early decision</i> applications and mail by mid-month.</p> <p>October 1 SAT test</p>	<p>Study hard! Results from your first term are critical!</p> <p>Complete other U.S. regular-decision university applications by the end of November – don't wait until the last minute.</p> <p>Check residence application process – this is different for each university.</p> <p>November 5 SAT</p>	<p>Applications completed for Ontario universities. You will do this on the computers in the Guidance Centre – we will be there to help</p> <p>Applications for McGill and Alberta universities completed if time permits.</p> <p>Final chance to mail off U.S. applications</p> <p>December 3 SAT</p>	<p>Complete applications to B.C. and other Canadian universities in the Guidance Centre.</p> <p>Apply for residence if required – remember that this is often a separate step to the university application – check!</p> <p>Mid-year marks are sent to universities outside of B.C. this month.</p> <p>Ask if you're not sure!</p> <p>January 28 SAT</p>
<b>February</b>	<b>March</b>	<b>April</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>June</b>
<p><b>All</b> outstanding university applications must be completed</p> <p>Some universities ask students to self-submit marks on-line (eg. UVic, UBC, SFU, McGill, Calgary, Alberta) – make sure you do this by the dates indicated in the information sent to you.</p>	<p>Mid-year marks are sent to the Ministry of Education at the end of the month (for B.C. university admissions).</p> <p>Some Canadian universities will send out offers of admission in March/April – others wait until May. Don't panic!</p>	<p>Keep all university correspondence in a file.</p> <p><b>Read the mail you receive.</b> If you are unsure of anything, bring it to us so we can help you sort through it. <b>Remember that we don't know what you receive unless you tell us!</b></p> <p>Most U.S. regular decision offers sent early this month</p>	<p>B.C. university admission offers made mid-month if not before.</p> <p>Registration materials sent from many universities. Make certain to read carefully so you <b>pay deposits on time</b> and send off necessary forms.</p> <p><b>Double check that all forms have been sent and deposits made for residence and registration where needed.</b></p>	<p>Study hard for your final exams. Many offers of admission are conditional based on your final results.</p>

## Who is responsible?

<b>We will.....</b>	<b>You will.....</b>
<p>Meet with you in small groups and individual appointments.</p> <p>Help you determine appropriate choices for university or college based on your interests, your courses, your school record, and where you would like to study.</p> <p>Remind you of the many deadlines as they come up, but <b>you</b> are responsible for making sure you check what needs to be sent, where and when.</p> <p>Assist you with your applications.</p> <p>Set up sessions to complete applications</p> <p>Arrange payment of application fees (to be billed to parent's account)</p> <p>Help with your U.S applications - by individual appointments</p> <p>Send school reports and transcripts as required.</p> <p>Review your application before it is sent.</p> <p>Send scholarship information to you by email as we receive it.</p> <p>Keep a binder of current scholarships in the Guidance Office.</p> <p>Send necessary school transcripts and documents.</p>	<p><b><u>Read your email!</u></b> We will notify you about appointments and send you important reminders via email.</p> <p>Do some research before our meetings (ideally in the summer)</p> <p>Follow-up suggestions with more research</p> <p>Talk to your parents about your choices</p> <p>Complete applications on time.</p> <p>Ask if you're not sure.</p> <p>Attend group sessions when arranged.</p> <p>Begin work on US applications well before the deadlines</p> <p>Contact teachers for references using the appropriate forms. Allow at least 3 weeks for completion of references. <b>Do not ask teachers at the last minute for a reference</b></p> <p>Have everything ready to send by mid-October (early-decision) or the end of November (regular-decision).</p> <p>Keep copies of everything!</p> <p>Research scholarships to determine those you are eligible for.</p> <p>Apply for scholarships by appropriate deadline</p> <p>Obtain references as required – allow at least 3 weeks for completion.</p>

## **We will.....**

Remind you to complete residence applications.

Send school marks to universities and colleges at the required time.

Up-date marks later in the year if an improvement may increase chance of admission.

Help you understand what is sent to you from the universities/colleges.

Assist you with any forms that need completion if you're confused.

If you receive a registration package, we will help you choose courses and complete your registration if it takes place before the end of the year

Help you in any way we can.

## **You will.....**

Find out what the application process is for residence at the schools you are applying to. Be aware that some applications must be done as early as November, others come with offers of admission later in the spring. **Meet the deadlines!**

Send residence deposits as required. You will need to arrange this with your parents well in advance of the deadline. Most deposits for residence are due in May or June and require a payment of \$300 - \$1000.

Work hard to receive the best marks you can! This is particularly important in the first 2 terms as conditional admission is based on these marks.

### **Read your mail and your email!**

If you are confused by anything – you must see us. All the correspondence is sent to you so we have no idea what you receive until you tell us.

Pay your registration deposit when it is required.

Take some initiative to read through what is sent to you. Let us know if you're still confused or uncertain.

Be organized, keep all correspondence in a file (not in the bottom of your sock drawer).

***Finally – don't panic! Ask if you're not sure.***