

Secondary School

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September 2016

Dear Parent

Welcome to the British International School University and Careers Counselling Service.

Choosing the right university for your child can seem daunting and overwhelming, but with the right planning and research, the process becomes more streamlined and simple. As BISI University & Careers Counselor, I am here to offer information, advice and guidance in the process. I will be your advisor and advocate as you negotiate the vast amount of information and possibilities available in order to achieve the best fit for you and your child.

And you have a crucial role to play in helping your child plan their future learning, in addition to funding it!

Being parents of university-bound teenagers means striking a difficult balance. While your children need your support and advice, this is one of their first significant adult decisions. Encourage your child to have confidence in his or her abilities, but also give them the authority to be in charge of the process. It is a good idea to have a discussion as a family about what role each person will play. How will you discuss universities and university options? What are the expectations of each person involved? What are realistic financial considerations? You are essential in this process.

We wish you all patience as you attempt to be sounding boards, resources, travel companions and cheerleaders, while also treading lightly on teenagers desperately hoping to live up to your expectations and trying to create their own identity, separate from their parents.

Some of the things you can do to support your child's negotiation of the university application process are:

- Meet the University and Careers Counselor to discuss your child's plans, dreams, abilities and choices.
- Become active partners in exploring university options and possibilities.
- Take an interest in day-to-day school work.
- Take an interest in ideas and plans for the future.
- Share your own experiences of work and training, both good and bad.
- Read up on college/university information especially with regard to finances.
- Access relevant websites, for example: **UK:** www.ucas.com; **USA:** sat.collegeboard.com, www.commonapp.org; **Canada:** www.canada123.org; **Turkey:** see individual websites such as www.ku.edu.tr.
- Listen to ALL their ideas.
- Encourage them to use all possible sources of help and information.

- Encourage them to aim high, but at the same time, to be realistic in terms of their grades, capabilities and interests.
- Attend university fairs and university school visits.
- Discuss plans and any financial restrictions openly and honestly with your child early in the process and share these with the counselor.
- Visit university campuses with your child, attend open days, email universities directly.
- Encourage your child to find the most appropriate universities, not ‘trophy’ universities. Help your child to look beyond the same ten universities as everyone else and discover places where s/he will best fit.
- Make sure you know the BISI internal deadlines for the application process (available from the counselor office or from information given to your child).
- Plan family holidays in a way that is supportive of this process. There is a wide range of summer schools and programs run by universities and colleges open to school-age students.
- Make sure your child has fully completed applications but encourage them to work through the entire process as *independently* as possible.
- Check your child’s application, but do not write the application for them.

Keep talking with your child. Check with your son or daughter regularly about the progress of the application process. A weekly check-in between parents and students is a good way to stay on top of the process while encouraging students to take responsibility for the process.

You have a unique and important role in your child's life and career plans. Being supportive and interested, and at the same time, encouraging them to take responsibility for their own lives and decisions is a difficult balance to achieve. The good news is that there are other people who can help you, including the University Counselor, the IBDP Coordinator, the Key Stage Leaders and of course, your child's teachers.

Important External Events

Instead of just researching options online, **university fairs** are a chance for you to meet universities face-to-face. Interacting with official representatives and alumni is a key benefit, as are getting immediate personalized responses to questions, finding out more about the programs and funding opportunities on offer, and getting an idea of the application process – all reasons to attend in person, rather than just stick to online research.

Attending a university fair is also an opportunity to get a better idea of **what university admissions officers are looking for**. Generally they are keeping an eye out for attributes such as curiosity, determination, passion and focus, and have a wealth of tips for parents looking to support their children’s applications.

There are several international university fairs that run throughout the year here in Istanbul. They usually take place over a weekend, and I strongly urge you to attend at least one together with your child. If you would like your child to attend and you are unable to come along, please let me know, and I will arrange to accompany them.

Sunday 4 October
CIS Education Fair
 Hilton Hotel Harbiye

12:30-5:30

No website

Saturday 10 October

A2 International Education Fair

Hilton Hotel Harbiye

13:00-18:00

Website: <http://www.universityfairs.com/fairs/a2-international-education-fairs-turkey-fall-2015-9540>

Saturday 17 October – Sunday 18 October

IEFT International Education Fair Turkey

Hilton Hotel Harbiye

Website: <http://ieft.net/>

Internal university visits

Apart from the university fairs, BISI is visited throughout the year by a variety of universities from around the world. It is a chance for our students to meet representatives and ask questions as well as to view presentations. As parents, you are very welcome to attend these meetings as well. They mostly take place during lunch hour, and last about 45 minutes. Some of the upcoming visits are:

Friday 2 October – **City University**, 13:05 – 13:45 pm.

Wednesday 7 October – **Kings, University of London** 13:00 – 13:30 pm

I will be sending out notifications of further visits as they are arranged.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at any time if you have any questions or would like to arrange an appointment to discuss your child's future. As an additional resource, the BISI University and Careers Handbook will be available soon and will be sent out to all Year 12 parents and students.

My email is: k.hawthorne@bisistanbul.org

I look forward to working together with you to create the best possible future for your child!

Dr Kathleen Hawthorne
University and Careers Counsellor
British International School Istanbul

