

# Higher Education in the U.S.

3 October 2017

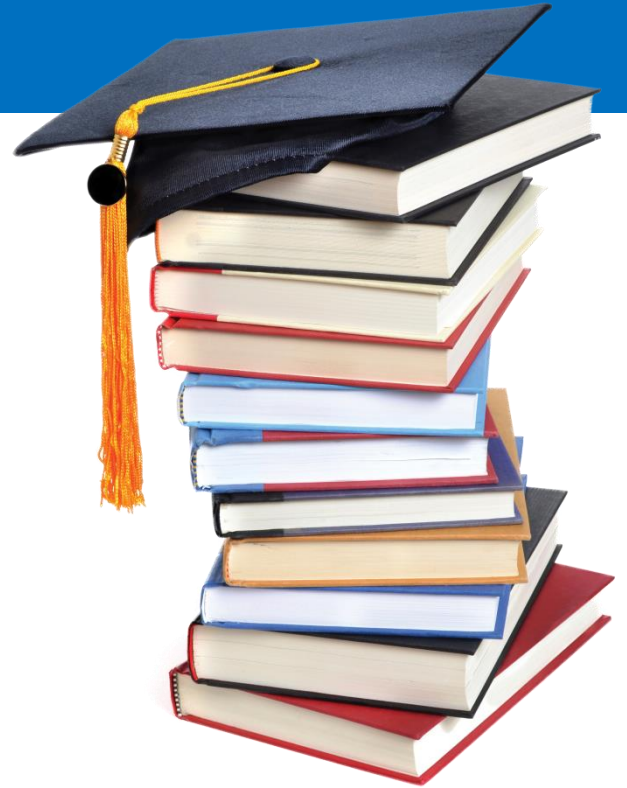


**FULBRIGHT COMMISSION**  
Academic Exchanges between the United States, Belgium and Luxembourg



# 5 Steps to U.S. Study

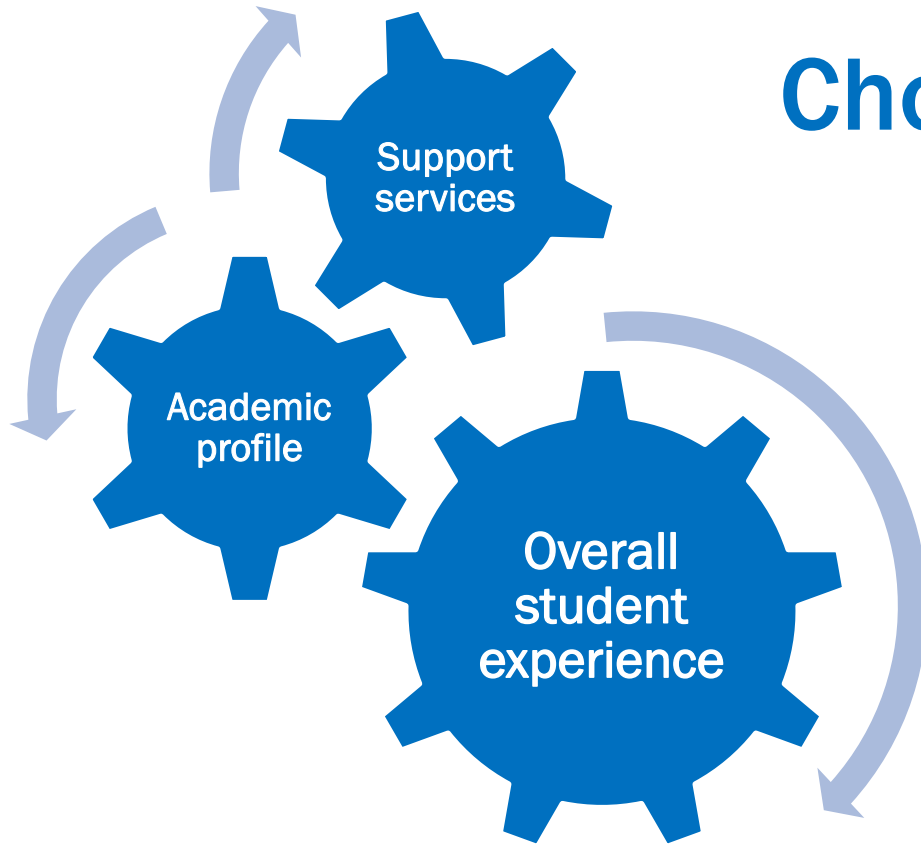
1. Research Your Options
2. Finance Your Studies
3. Complete Your Application
4. Apply for Your Student Visa
5. Prepare for Your Departure



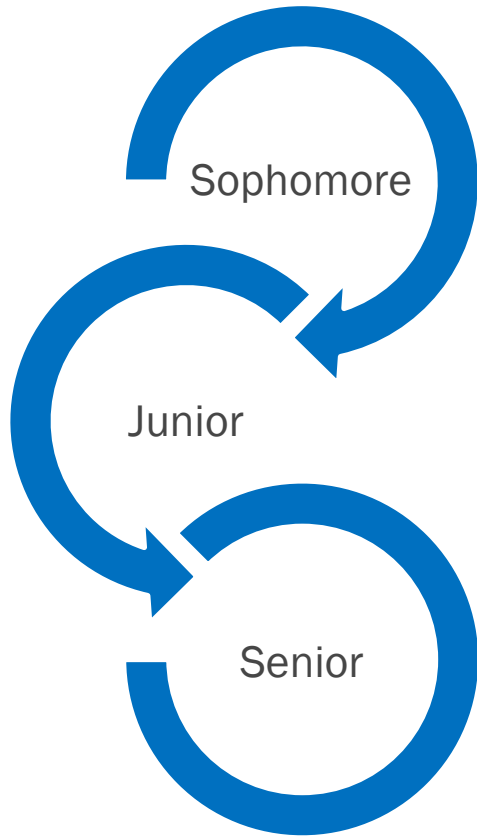
# Before You Decide

- What are your goals, whether academic, personal, or professional?
- How will going to university help you to achieve these goals, and what are you hoping to get out of your experience?

# Choosing a University



- Academic profile
- Overall experience
- Support services for (international) students
- Cost and financial aid options



# Application Timeline

- **Sophomore Year**
  - Begin researching your options
- **Junior Year**
  - Research your options
  - Take standardized tests
- **Senior Year**
  - Retake standardized tests (if necessary)
  - Prepare and submit applications
  - Apply for student visa

# Application Components

- Application form
- High school transcript
- Standardized test scores (SAT/ACT)
- Proof of English proficiency (e.g., TOEFL, IELTS)
- Letters of recommendation
- Admission essays (“the personal statement”)
- Extracurricular activities + community involvement
- Maybe → audition/portfolio? Interview?

# High School Transcript

- Official report of all grades received during secondary school
- Submitted directly by the school
- Grades will be ‘translated’ internally by university admission’s office in order to compare with domestic + other international students

# Standardized Tests

- All students submit standardized test scores:
  - SAT or ACT
  - maybe SAT Subject Tests?
- International students whose first language is not English submit proof of English proficiency (e.g., TOEFL, IELTS)

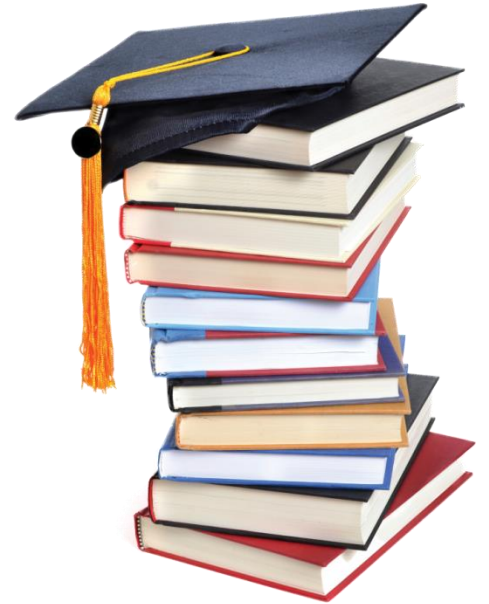


# Letters of Recommendation

- Recommendation letters can be written by:
  - Teachers
  - Employers
  - Mentors/coaches
- Prioritize people who know you well and can speak to diverse characteristics (e.g., leadership, academic talent)

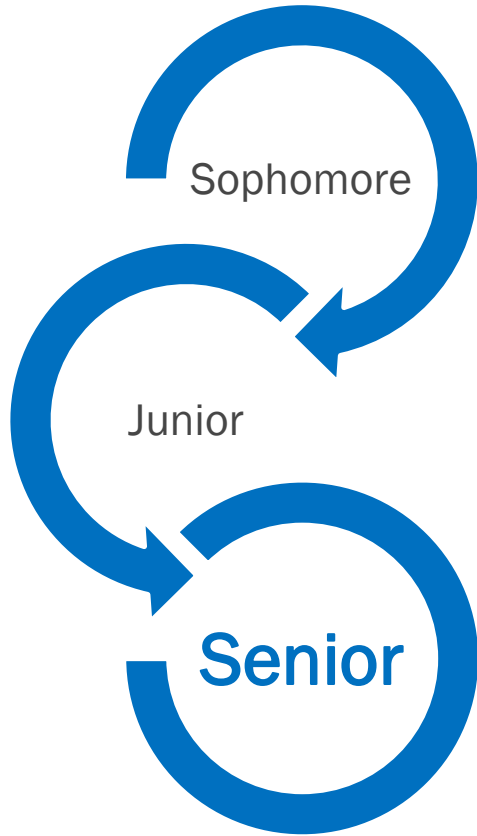
# Admission Essays

- Narrative personal statement
- Opportunity for student to present himself/herself to university
- Essay requirements may vary: pay attention to university admission requirements!



# Extracurricular Activities

- Important aspect of holistic admissions process
- Extracurricular activities can include:
  - School clubs + organizations
  - After-school/summer jobs
  - Involvement in church, community, etc.
  - Sports
- Universities look for commitment and leadership (e.g., captain of the football team, three-year volunteer)



# Application Timeline

- Retake standardized tests (if necessary)
- Finalize list of colleges
- Request letters of recommendation
- Prepare and submit applications
- Evaluate and compare offers of admission before making a decision
- Line up financial support
- Apply for student visa

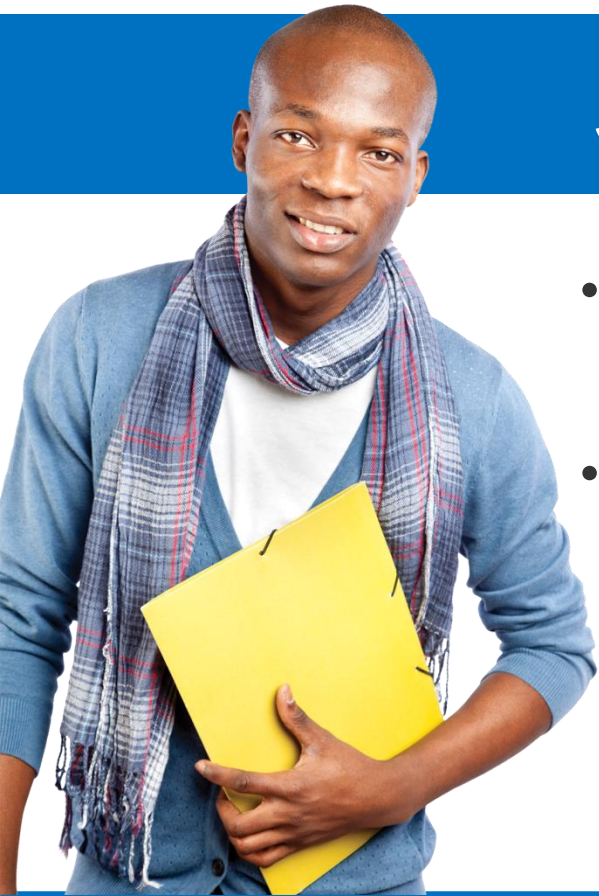
# Calculating Your Expenses

- **Tuition and fees**
  - Cost varies depending on institution (e.g., higher fees at private universities without state funding)
  - No correlation with quality of university
- **Don't forget to account for living expenses (e.g., transportation, books), which can vary greatly!**

# Financing Your Studies

- **Students may opt to finance their studies using some combination of the following:**
  - Scholarships (based on merit)
  - Financial aid (based on demonstrated need)
  - Loans
  - Student employment
  - Personal and family funds

# Student Employment



- International students are legally allowed to work on campus (up to 20 hours per week during school, full-time during vacation)
- Keep in mind...
  - Low wages + limited work hours = limited income
  - Resident Advisor (RA) = free housing + stipend
  - Off-campus work after first year = only with authorization from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)
  - Full-time studies + part-time job ≠ a lot of free time

# Institutional Financial Aid

- Usually a combination of scholarships/grants, loans, and on-campus jobs
- Need-based aid is based on student's financial situation (how much student/family can pay) and awards may not meet student's 'full need'
- Merit-based aid is based on quality of student's application (e.g., test scores, grades, special talents)
- Amount of financial aid available for international students varies from school to school



# Don't Forget...

- Estimate the cost of attendance with an online cost calculator
- Start early to research scholarships and financial aid deadlines
- Know what makes you special!
- Be honest when reporting your financial situation



