



African Leadership Academy
Developing the next generation of African leaders

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COUNTRIES EDUCATION SYSTEMS

African Leadership Academy students are strongly encouraged to apply to a variety of universities around the world. The process for applying to universities in your home country may be simpler than applying to institutions elsewhere. Before you start your university or university selection, it's important to understand the way in which undergraduate programs are shaped. We strongly encourage students to look not only within their home countries, but to explore outside opportunities that will help shape your life after ALA, whether it is in the US, UK, Canada, Europe, etc.

We also encourage students and families to discuss the idea of going far away for university study. If the separation from family and home has been very difficult during your ALA time, perhaps a university closer to home, or at least near to family/friends is appropriate. If your intended course of study is particularly strong in one country or region, that may be where you should focus your university search. Perhaps the language of instruction will dictate the areas in which you search. The best education will be received at a school that suits the students' academic, social, geographical and financial needs...wherever that school might be located. ***Do not assume that going to the US or UK necessarily means going to a better university, or getting a better education.***

The following provides a brief overview of universities systems in other countries.

UNITED STATES

University and College in the United States denote the same thing with the major difference being what each offers. A **College** is an institution devoted primarily to undergraduate programs which is what follows high school. A **University** offers a combination of both undergraduate and graduate programs which include Masters and Doctorate degrees. Universities are frequently committed to research as well as teaching. One is not better than the other - they both offer four-year Bachelor degree programs.

It is not often required to know your subject of study when you start university in the US. Quite a number of students list themselves as undecided until the end of their second year. In doing so, they can explore a range of subjects and career options before they have to declare a major. This is the rule except for certain majors such as engineering where students are asked to declare a major from the beginning. You may also find some universities will give you an option of applying to a particular university within the university, e.g. Liberal Arts and Sciences, Music, Engineering, Health Sciences, etc.

If you are undecided, most schools offer a variety of courses sometimes known as core or general education requirements which expose students to a variety of disciplines ensuring they have a breadth of knowledge in addition to their chosen major. Admission into the more selective programs in the US is often on the basis of the following: overall academic achievement; good entrance exam scores e.g. SAT; steady extra-curricular participation and recommendations from your teachers.



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UNITED KINGDOM

There are several major differences between UK and US university systems. The majority of degree programs in the UK (except for Scotland) take three years to complete, and students focus solely on the one or two subjects they have chosen to study. Thus, there are no general education requirements as there are in the US. If you are absolutely certain of the course you want to study after high school, a UK university could be a good choice for you.

If you are someone who loves one or two subjects, but is not interested in taking another class in some other area, the UK system would provide you with that very specific type of education. If you are undecided about your major, be aware that in order to apply to schools in the UK, you would have to make a decision about what to study, and that transferring to a different subject usually entails starting your degree over from the beginning.

NOTE: A major factor that will affect your decision to attend a school in the UK over the US will be the issue of cost. There are relatively few scholarships available to international students at universities in the UK so you will need to carefully consider the programs you are applying to especially if cost may be the deciding factor.

CANADA

Canada is divided into several provinces, some which are French speaking. In Canada, there is a very real distinction between a university and a university. Institutions granting bachelors and advanced degrees are universities. Universities only focus on vocational and technical training. A school within a Canadian university (such as arts, science, or commerce) is called a faculty or a university which is similar to the system in US and UK universities.

Canadian universities actively welcome international students. Each university in Canada has a general minimum admission standard based on Canadian grading standards. These minimum grades and course requirements vary from faculty to faculty. If you are interested in being admitted to an engineering program, you may be required to earn an 80%. Since an 80% is an A- on the Canadian scale your ALA grades will be reviewed with those differences in mind. If you're looking at Canada, it's important to contact the university to understand the application requirements, such as transcript and SAT scores. Some schools also require SAT Subject Tests or A-Level results in particular subjects. For further information, check each school's website, speak with your counselor, and talk to visiting Canadian university representatives.

After applying, each university will send an email or letter acknowledging receipt of your application and requesting transcripts and other documents. That letter will contain your personal student number.

Be sure to provide this number to the counseling office, because it should be written on your transcript and any other documents to ensure these important items are filed correctly. It may be necessary to send transcript updates at the end of March in your final year, and in some cases, after graduation, so be sure to keep your grades up throughout your second year at ALA!



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FRANCE

All students should normally possess a *Baccalaur at (BAC)*, or equivalent international qualification. There are two different types of educational institutes: Universities, and Competitive Institutes. The more than 80 universities and over 300 competitive institutes in France admit large numbers of students in various subjects, every year. Majority of the students go to Universities, which offer general courses and professional courses. The universities cover all disciplines and prepare students for research. The Competitive Institutes in France yield fewer students after a systematic selection process and offer courses that specialize students in areas that have direct career opportunities. Students will have to apply to universities in France directly. Preliminary contact with the French universities is highly recommended since their admission criteria and procedures vary.

AUSTRALIA

Because Australia is in the southern hemisphere, the school year begins in February except for a small mid-year intake in July. Applications are usually submitted in September, a few months after you have graduated from high school. If you are considering Australia, obviously one of the first questions to ask is how you would occupy yourself from the time you graduate until university begins. Australia recently, has been more proactive in recruiting international students and has done well in increasing their overall international student numbers. Please note however that you will need to be mindful of expenses including the cost of travel.

With a little extra work, it is possible to enter Australian universities with your ALA school diploma. The more selective universities will only accept a student with high SAT scores and two to four strong A Level scores. Others will do a basic review of your academic record and transcripts instead. If your qualifications are not sufficient to gain admission, you may enrol in a six to twelve month Foundation Year. Success in this program usually gains entry into a university. Many courses in Australia are three years long, so taking the Foundation Year still provides a comparable four year US experience.

SOUTH AFRICA

There are more than 20 public universities in South Africa. Some of these are considered comprehensive and others are universities of technology. They both offer Bachelors, Honors, Masters and Doctorate degrees, as well as undergraduate and postgraduate diplomas. Several of South Africa's comprehensive universities are internationally recognized for their research in areas such as astronomy, business, palaeontology, and public policy in Africa, as well as the calibre of student produced. Students are admitted on a competitive basis, upon their admissions points score (APS) calculated from their matriculation examination marks. The required APS varies from course to course, and between universities.

AROUND AFRICA

Almost every country in Africa offers a slightly different education system. It is important to learn more about accredited university programs in your home countries. You may be surprised at the wealth and depth of particular programs in an institution that may be down the road from where you grew up! We strongly encourage you to familiarize yourself with the admission process into universities in your home country. Selection criteria at most universities in Africa will be based



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solely on academic achievement.

ALA will and continues to work with universities and organizations in the continent committed to developing the next generation of African leaders in Africa. As a result, we are pleased to announce that ALA is the first school of its kind to be the beneficiary of a generous grant from the Colgate Palmolive Foundation that will make it possible to award two ALA students a full scholarship to attend a select group of top universities in Africa! An internship opportunity will be made available to them as well as a work opportunity for as many years as they receive the scholarship. We look forward to offering similar opportunities over the next few years that will make it possible for ALA students to study anywhere within Africa.

OTHER COUNTRIES

If you are interested in learning about universities in other parts of the world, like the University of Aachen (Germany), Yonsei in South Korea, Jacobs University in Germany, IE in Spain, the National University of Singapore, Peking University (China) or the Chinese University of Hong Kong, **or one of the many other options around the world**, please visit the counselling office and we will work to help you in your contact with these universities.