



The Ultimate UCAT Guide

US Boarding Schools

meet India

Don't Let Senioritis Get You Down!

Immigration Oriented Study Abroad

Keep in Touch With The Dutch



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Thinking of applying to medical school in the UK? You will have to sit the UCAT - a specialised test designed to help universities select their applicants. Read on for everything you need to know about the UCAT and its sections!

James Rice

What Is The UCAT?

The University Clinical Aptitude Test (UCAT) is an admissions test required for medicine at UK universities. The Biomedical Admissions Test (BMAT) used to be the other test used, but has now been withdrawn, so most universities (except for Oxford which has not yet confirmed its updated arrangements) are swapping to the UCAT. The UCAT is also used for admissions to medical schools in Australia and New Zealand, as well as a handful of international universities in other countries. So taking the UCAT gives you a lot of options for medical school in the UK and across the world! You might also hear about the UCAT ANZ, which is the same exam: 'ANZ' stands for Australia and New Zealand. You'll take the UCAT ANZ if you're in Australia or New Zealand, but you can still use it to apply to any country. There are also the UCATSEN, UCATSA, UCATSENSA and UCATSEN50 – these are versions of the exam with extra time or rest breaks for candidates with special exam arrangements because of disability. Make sure you apply for the extra time if you need it!

What Are The UCAT Sections?

The UCAT is made up of 5 sections, which each test different skills and are scored separately. This means that if you underperform in one section, you can make up for lost points in another. The first four sections are cognitive-based and scored from 300-900. The scores are then added together to give an overall score from 1200-3600. The first section is verbal reasoning (VR), where you have 21 minutes to answer 44 questions. Each question is based on a 200-300 word passage of text – you have 11 texts and 4 questions about each text. About one-third of the questions are the (easier!) true/false/can't tell type where you are asked if a statement is true or false based on the passage. The other questions ask you to pick the most suitable statement from four statements based on the passage.

You then have a one-minute break before moving on to the next section, Decision Making (DM), where you have 31 minutes to answer 29 questions.

DM tests your logical reasoning without including any specific mathematical knowledge. You will find questions based on Venn diagrams, syllogisms (reasoning to a conclusion from previous statements), probability, argumentation, and other kinds of logical puzzles.

The next section is Quantitative Reasoning (QR), with 36 questions in 25 minutes. QR focuses on GCSE (16 year old) level mathematical reasoning, applied in tricky ways, like giving very large data tables. Most questions come in sets of four that all apply to the same data.

Abstract reasoning (AR) is the final cognitive UCAT subtest and is usually the most strikingly different from exams you may have taken before. You have 12 minutes to answer 50 questions based on pattern recognition, a bit like an IQ test. Most questions are shown in sets of five, and you are asked if the shape you're shown fits into one of two pattern-based sets or neither.

The Situational Judgement Test (SJT) is the final UCAT subtest. It is not scored out of 900 but split into bands, from band 1 (best) to band 4 (worst). You have 26 minutes to answer 69 questions around how doctors or medical students should behave ethically in a variety of scenarios. You usually have to rank the appropriateness or importance of certain actions in the scenario.

Which Universities Require The UCAT?

All UK medical schools require the UCAT, as the other medical admissions test, the BMAT, has been withdrawn. The only current exception to that is Oxford University, which hasn't yet confirmed whether it will switch to the UCAT or craft a new test for 2024 applicants. You can also take the UCAT for universities in Australia and New Zealand, and a handful of other universities. You should always check what admissions test the universities you want to apply to use well in advance – they can change, as we saw with the BMAT! Universities may also require other tests alongside the UCAT, like the CASPer exam that Kent and Medway uses for some applicants, an English test for international applicants, or Sunderland's numeracy test at an interview.

How Is The UCAT Used In Admissions?

This question is a bit like asking how long is a piece of string, unfortunately! Different medical schools all use the UCAT in different ways and it can change year on year. The best thing to do is always to check with the individual medical schools – increasingly, many publish a lot of information on their websites.

In general, there are three broad ways universities can use the UCAT:

- As the sole tool for selection after checking candidates meet other requirements. In this
 case, universities take all eligible candidates, rank them by UCAT score, and invite the topranked candidates to interview. The interview cutoff becomes the UCAT score of the last
 person invited to interview. Newcastle, Bristol, and Sheffield are examples of medical
 schools that have historically done this.
- As part of a component score, where the UCAT is scored alongside other factors (typically GCSEs or widening participation). Scottish medical schools, Nottingham and Leicester are examples of medical schools that have historically done this.
- As a one-off check for example, requiring that all applicants have a UCAT score above the bottom 2 deciles (so in the top 80% of test-takers) or a SJT score of band 3 or above.
 Kent and Medway, Sunderland and Cardiff are examples of medical schools that have historically done this.



In general, though, there will likely be a medical school that uses the UCAT in a way that suits your score – you just need to find it! However, a UCAT in the bottom 20% of test-takers or a band 4 SJT will be a problem for most UK medical schools.

Where To Register For The UCAT?

You should register for the UCAT on the UCAT Consortium's online website. It is simple to use and can be found here: https://www.ucat.ac.uk.

To register, you will need to make an account with Pearson VUE, the company that runs testing, and validate your email address. When you register, you should:

- Use your legal name as it shows on your ID.
- Make sure this name matches what it is on your UCAS application.
- Wait for your password to come via email and contact Pearson VUE if it doesn't arrive within 36 hours.
- Apply for UCATSEN or other access arrangements, and for a bursary, if eligible.

This year, you can book the UCAT on June 18th - the last test day is September 26 2024. For UCAT ANZ, booking opens on March 5th 2024, and the test period is shorter, with the closing date on August 9th 2024. Registration fees are £70 for tests taken in the UK and £115 for tests outside the UK in 2024. If you need to, you can apply for the UCAT bursary to cover the cost of the test if you're from the UK.

When To Take The UCAT?

You can take the UCAT from the start of July to the end of September. The important thing is taking the test at the best time for you: the test is the same difficulty throughout the testing period, so there's no inherent advantage to taking it earlier or later.

In general, most people take around 6-8 weeks to prepare for the UCAT so you want to book your test with enough time to practice. Plan around any holidays, summer work or work experience you might be doing: the day after you get back from a festival with your friends may not be the best time to take it! For many people, taking a break after the end of school and then taking about 6 weeks to prepare means testing in late August makes sense. The goal is to give yourself enough time to both prepare and then reflect on where to apply with your score.

How To Prepare For The UCAT?

It is important to prepare for the UCAT early and to make sure you practice. In general, you want to practice timed questions early on as the most difficult part of the UCAT is the timing. You will also want to do several full mock exams under exam conditions – so make sure you give yourself enough time! The UCAT is in some ways a test of speed: being well prepared with shortcuts and strategies on how to approach each section in the most time-efficient way, picking up any easy marks, is crucial. Time to go over the questions you practice and find out what you did wrong is as important as spending time doing questions. What can often go wrong, especially with thousands of questions and twenty to thirty mock exams available via most exam prep sites, is that students do all the questions... but make the same mistakes each time. Taking time to work out what you did wrong, and how you'll change your exam strategy for next time, is key. At the same time, you don't want to burn out: taking breaks and having time to do fun things will, paradoxically, boost your score! Often people find that you can overprepare for the UCAT, and their scores go down after two months or so of prep. Taking breaks is the best way to avoid this.

Common Misconceptions Surrounding The UCAT

"The UCAT is impossible!"

When you first hear about the UCAT, it can sound really difficult: it's very time-pressured, and the variety of sections means there will be something you're less confident with.



But tens of thousands of people sit the UCAT every year and thousands of people get into medical schools. Over three thousand people get top decile (top 10% of test-taker) scores – it's achievable! Rather than focusing on how hard the exam is, focus on what you need to do to achieve the best score you can. Break the exam down into chunks and map what you need to cover.

"I need to start preparing at age 12 or I won't stand a chance!"

This isn't true – if anything, preparing for too long can harm your score and cause you to burn out. Preparing for 6-8 weeks over the summer is more than enough for most test-takers, and many will prepare for less time. But it is important to prepare, as being familiar with the UCAT format is crucial: less than two weeks is definitely risky. You want to make sure you have time to rest.

"The UCAT is unfair - my aptitude for medicine can't be measured by a glorified IQ test!"

On one level, this is true – it's why medical schools also use interviews and academic grades, as well as personal statements and references. At the end of the day, though, there are more medical school applicants than places at the moment: medical schools had to pick some kind of extra selection hurdle. The UCAT is objective and is arguably one of the fairest ways to select med applicants.

"A good UCAT score means I'm guaranteed an interview!"

No medical school automatically accepts applicants with a high enough UCAT score. They will also have minimum academic qualification requirements and other scoring criteria. Having a strong UCAT score will definitely help your application, but beware: you should always do your research into how that medical school selects candidates for interview!





US BOARDING SCHOOLS MEET INDIA The Advantages of Attending a US Boarding School as an International Student By David W. Baker Associate Director of Admission St. Johnsbury Academy



David Baker

In today's globalized world, education knows no boundaries. For international students seeking a transformative educational experience, US boarding schools offer a unique blend of academic rigor, cultural immersion, and personal growth potential. From forging lifelong friendships and gaining essential skills for living independently, to gaining access to top-tier universities, the benefits of studying at a US boarding school are abundant.

US boarding schools are renowned for their commitment to academic excellence, fostering a dynamic learning environment that encourages intellectual curiosity and critical thinking. With small class sizes and dedicated faculty, students receive personalized attention and support, ensuring they reach their full potential. Beyond academics, boarding schools offer a rich array of extracurricular activities, from athletics to the arts, providing students with opportunities to explore their passions and develop leadership skills. Additionally, the residential aspect of boarding school life fosters independence and resilience, preparing students for the challenges of university and beyond.

International students can typically enter US boarding schools at any grade level. There are some "junior boarding schools" which typically start accepting boarding students as young as US grade 6, or about 11 or 12 years old. The most traditional entry point for international boarding students is 9th or 10th grade, or ages 14–16. However, some schools will accept new international boarding students entering 11th or 12th grade (17–18), and some have one-year, post-graduate programs for students who are 19 or 20. While admission requirements vary by school, prospective students typically undergo a holistic evaluation process that considers academic transcripts, standardized test scores, letters of recommendation, and personal essays. Additionally, English language proficiency tests such as the TOEFL or IELTS may be required for non-native speakers. Some schools may also conduct interviews to assess a student's fit for the community. Admission to some US boarding schools is very competitive, while some schools accept over 80% of applicants. There is truly a boarding school for every student.

When choosing a US boarding school for their child, parents must consider a multitude of factors to ensure the best fit. Size, for instance, plays a significant role in shaping the student experience, with smaller schools offering a close-knit community and individualized attention, while larger institutions may provide a broader range of resources and opportunities. Cost is another crucial consideration, with tuition, room, and board varying widely among schools and financial assistance also varying. Additionally, parents should examine the geographical location of the school, taking into account factors such as climate, proximity to major cities, and cultural amenities. Some families know that they would want their student living near a major city or airport, while others may be excited about their student experiencing something more rural, away from the hustle and bustle that they might be used to in their home countries. Furthermore, researching a school's university matriculation list can provide insights into its track record of preparing students for higher education.

Fortunately, parents have access to a wealth of resources to aid them in their search for the perfect boarding school. Companies such as Boarding School Review and The Association of Boarding Schools (TABS) provide comprehensive directories of US boarding schools on their websites, allowing parents to compare institutions based on various criteria, including academics, extracurriculars, and student demographics. Additionally, publications like U.S. News & World Report and The Princeton Review publish annual rankings of top boarding schools, offering valuable insights into their reputations and academic quality.

While the cost of attending a US boarding school can be significant, many institutions can work with families on a budget that is manageable over the student's course of study. Unlike universities in the United States, merit and athletic-based scholarships are not typically available for boarding schools. Families can apply for financial aid which typically comes directly out of a school's operating budget, and therefore can be limited, so the availability of financial assistance varies greatly among schools. Some schools do not offer any financial aid to international students, and others offer significant aid.

Attending a US boarding school as an international student opens doors to a world of opportunities. From academic excellence to cultural immersion, the benefits are vast and far-reaching. By carefully considering factors such as school size, cost, and location, parents can find the perfect fit for their child. With the support of resources and financial aid opportunities, students can embark on a transformative educational journey that will shape their future success.



THE FUTURE OF ROBOTICS.



Explored here.



Studying the gait patterns of animals to create locomotion in quadruped robots. It's just one way Syracuse University researchers are crossing disciplines to spark new ideas.



DON'T LET SENIORITIS GET YOU DOWN!

Insights from a College Admissions Officer on Why Your Final Semester Matter

By Jim Crawley Director of Global Recruitment Hope College



Jim Crawley

You've almost done it! Graduation is on the horizon and approaching very fast! It would be very easy to sit back and relax for the last few months. You have your university admission letters and you may have even made your final university choice. What difference will the final semester of marks and test scores make now?

From the perspective of an admissions officer from a selective college in the U.S., I can tell you that these final grades can make ALL the difference. Offers of admission and offers of academic scholarship are based on your past performance in secondary school, but we also expect that level of achievement through the final semester. Colleges and universities are going to request your final transcript, and potentially exam results, depending on your curriculum, in the months after you graduate, but prior to your arrival.

There are cases every year where students have offers of admission, or more commonly, scholarship, rescinded by a university because the student did not maintain the same level of achievement. For example, if a scholarship is based on a specific grade average in secondary school, the college or university has the right to extend that requirement all the way through to the final grades.

Is having too much fun this last semester at the expense of your good marks, and not finishing strong on your exams worth potentially losing an offer of admission...or a scholarship? I don't think you want that to happen and I know your parents would not want to see that happen.

So what do you do if you ARE struggling with your classes, or you have some personal or family issues that are really affecting you? Don't try to handle it all alone!

Academically, ask for assistance...from your teacher, your counselor, or even a classmate who is doing very well in the subject you are struggling with. Possibly just talking it through, and hearing it explained by someone else will help you to understand the concept better.

Are you struggling with personal or family issues...you are not alone! In fact, there are likely classmates that are struggling with similar challenges. When we face struggles, the issues can tend to take priority in our mind, making it difficult for us to concentrate on other things. Many things that stress us out are actually out of our control. That does not make them any less stressful, in fact sometimes it creates more stress as we do not have control over the outcome. Again...do not try to handle things yourself. Find an adult you trust that you can talk to. Maybe it is a relative, a teacher, or a counselor. Sometimes just unloading everything in a conversation, and considering sound advice will be enough to swing you out of the situation, allowing you to concentrate on success in this final semester.

As I am sure you are finding out this is a time of hard work, but it is also full of creating lifelong memories. Some friends from secondary school will stay connected with you for years, while you may not see others again for a long time, or even ever again. Enjoy this time. Create memories, and prepare for the next phase of your life, whatever that looks like for you. If you are headed to university in a new country, you are in for a bit of change, and adjustment, but maintaining good academic practices now will facilitate a smooth transition and strengthen your chances of having a successful university experience.

Good luck in your classes and exams, and congratulations on your upcoming graduation!





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IMMIGRATION ORIENTED STUDY ABROAD Destinations to explore if you plan to migrate away from India after High School By Vinayak Rao Former Immigration Officer, New Zealand Embassy



Vinayak Rao

The prospect of relocating the entire family post-high school has become increasingly feasible for Indian families. Driven by the desire for a high quality of life and world class education for their children, coupled with the investment potential in developed economies leading to citizenship, families are increasingly opting for this pathway to settlement.

In this article, we delve into the key destinations that have emerged as prominent choices for families considering migration.

1. United States of America (USA)

The USA remains a top choice for Indian students post-high school due to its world-class education system, diverse culture, and ample job opportunities. With renowned universities like Harvard and Stanford, students can pursue their dreams in various fields. The country's vibrant cities, such as New York and San Francisco, offer a rich cultural experience. The USA has the highest number of top 100 QS-ranked universities in the world, further solidifying its reputation as a premier destination for higher education.

Residency By Investment for parents who wish to move with their family

Invest \$1,050,000 in a non-targeted employment area project, or \$800,000 in a targeted employment area project in a rural area or an area with high unemployment. Create or preserve 10 permanent full-time jobs for qualified U.S. workers. Have a minimum net worth of USD\$1 million. Green Card holders may attend U.S Schools and Universities at the same cost as U.S Citizens

2. Canada

Canada is a popular choice for Indian students seeking a high-quality education and a welcoming environment. With its multicultural society and stunning landscapes, Canada offers a unique blend of urban and natural experiences. Cities like Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal boast top-notch universities such as the University of Toronto, the University of British Columbia, and McGill University, all of which are ranked among the top 100 universities in the world according to the QS World University Rankings. Moreover, Canada's immigration policies are favorable for international students, making it easier to transition from student to permanent resident.

Residency By Investment

The Canada Startup Visa Program offers innovative entrepreneurs a pathway to Canadian permanent residency. Entrepreneurs with a qualifying business idea and support from a designated organization can apply for a startup visa, enabling them and their families to move to Canada. Investment could range from CAD 75,000 to 2,00,000.



The Quebec Investor Program offers investors an opportunity to obtain Canadian permanent residency by making a passive investment in Quebec. Applicants must have a net worth of at least CAD 2 million, have managerial experience, and be willing to invest CAD 1.2 million in a prescribed investment for a period of five years.

Permanent Residency by Express Entry System

Canada's Express Entry system selects skilled workers for permanent residency through points-based ranking. Critical skills in short supply in Canada include those in the fields of healthcare (such as nurses and physicians), technology (software developers and IT professionals), and engineering (mechanical, civil, and electrical engineers). Additionally, there is a demand for professionals in the finance, accounting, and education sectors.

3. Australia

Australia's laid-back lifestyle, stunning landscapes, and high-quality education make it a popular choice for Indian students. Cities like Sydney and Melbourne offer a vibrant cultural scene and a range of job opportunities. Additionally, Australia's post-study work visa allows students to gain valuable work experience after graduation, making it easier to transition to permanent residency. The Group of Eight (Go8) universities in Australia, including the University of Melbourne, the University of Sydney, and the Australian National University, are renowned for their research excellence and contributions to fields like medicine, engineering, and technology.

Residency By Investment

The Business Innovation and Investment Program (BIIP) in Australia is currently closed however should be re-launched on 1st July 2024. Investment ranges for the old system ranged from AUD\$1.5 Million to \$15 Million.

4. Portugal

Portugal is gaining popularity among Indian students due to its affordable education, welcoming environment, and rich cultural heritage. Cities like Lisbon and Porto offer a mix of history, art, and modernity. Portuguese universities, such as the University of Lisbon and the University of Porto, provide high-quality education in various fields. Additionally, Portugal's Golden Visa program offers a pathway to permanent residency for investors, making it an attractive option for those seeking long-term settlement.

Residency by Investment

Portugal offers a Golden Visa program that allows investors to obtain residency and, eventually, citizenship by investing in the country. To qualify for the Golden Visa, applicants must invest a minimum of €500,000 in investment funds or €5,00,000 in research, €2,50,000 arts, or preservation of national heritage. After five years, the visa holder will be considered for citizenship.

5. Ireland

Ireland is known for its friendly people, vibrant culture, and high-quality education system. Cities like Dublin and Cork offer a blend of history and modernity, with a range of cultural and recreational activities. Irish universities, such as Trinity College Dublin and University College Dublin, are globally recognized for their academic excellence. Moreover, Ireland's post-study work visa allows students to gain work experience after graduation, enhancing their career prospects. Dublin, in particular, serves as the European headquarters for many tech companies, offering students unique opportunities in the tech industry.



Residency by Investment

Immigrant Investor Program requires a minimum investment of €1 million in an approved investment fund or a minimum investment of €2 million in a mixed investment.

Ireland offers a Startup Entrepreneur Program and an Immigrant Investor Program. The Startup Entrepreneur Program requires a minimum investment of €50,000 and the creation of at least 10 jobs

6. New Zealand

New Zealand is renowned for its stunning natural landscapes, friendly locals, and high-quality education system. Cities like Auckland and Wellington offer a relaxed lifestyle and a range of outdoor activities. New Zealand's universities, such as the University of Auckland (68th QS World Rank) and the University of Otago (206th QS World Rank), are known for their research excellence and innovative teaching methods. Additionally, New Zealand's post-study work visa allows students to gain work experience after graduation, making it easier to transition to permanent residency.

Residency by Investment

The country offers an Investor Visa and an Entrepreneur Visa. The Investor Visa requires a minimum investment of NZ\$15 million in New Zealand, while the Entrepreneur Visa requires a minimum investment of NZ\$100,000 and the creation of at least three full-time jobs for at least two years.



KEEP IN TOUCH WITH THE DUTCH

Guiding Students in Choosing the Right Fit College in the Netherlands

By
Denise Nijhuis
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Denise Nijhuis

Over the last decades, the Netherlands has seen a steep rise in popularity as a study destination, drawing students from around the globe. Reasons for this surge are plentiful and include the quality of the education and student life, career prospects both for students who wish to stay in the Netherlands, as well as those who wish to return home, and finally, the affordability of degree programs. However, combined with an open application system, in which the selection of applicants is anything but the norm, the exponential growth of international student numbers is starting to put strains on the Dutch system.

As a result, talks about increasing selectivity of certain programs have started both at institutional and national levels. In the upcoming years, the role of college advisors and counselors working with students looking to study in the Netherlands will therefore become increasingly important.

The Allure of Higher Education in the Netherlands:

The Netherlands boasts a reputation for delivering high-quality education, characterized by innovative teaching methods and a strong emphasis on offering different types of education for students with different interests, needs and capabilities. Whether it is performing cutting-edge research, or a more hands-on approach learning a student needs, there is something for everyone. Dutch degrees are globally recognized and highly regarded (often in the top 2% of institutions worldwide), offering graduates a competitive edge in the job market.

In terms of career opportunities, the Netherlands provides a great stepping stone for many students. Many international cooperations (like AkzoNobel and Unilever) as well as international organizations (such as the International Criminal Court and the European Space Agency) are headquartered in the Netherlands, creating ample prospects for graduates. Non-EU students benefit from the orientation year visa, which allows them to stay in the Netherlands for up to a year after graduation to search for employment or start their own business. Students do not even have to take this chance immediately upon graduation but can do so within three years of obtaining their degree in the Netherlands.

Beyond academia, the Netherlands offers a vibrant and inclusive student experience. Campuses are diverse, multicultural hubs where students from various backgrounds come together to exchange ideas, forge lifelong friendships, and engage in enriching extracurricular activities. Being in the center of Europe, does not only let students experience all things Dutch, but allows them to easily explore other parts of the Europe as well.

Finally, the Netherlands is renowned for its affordability, making it an attractive option for numerous students. Compared to certain other popular study destinations for internationally mobile students, the cost of attendance, including tuition fees and living expenses, is remarkably reasonable.

Finding the Right Fit Institution

Students in the Netherlands have a diverse range of higher education types to choose from, catering to different academic interests, career aspirations, and learning styles.



With quality of programs ensured across the country, understanding the different options is a good place to start helping students explore their possibilities outside the most well-known programs and universities:

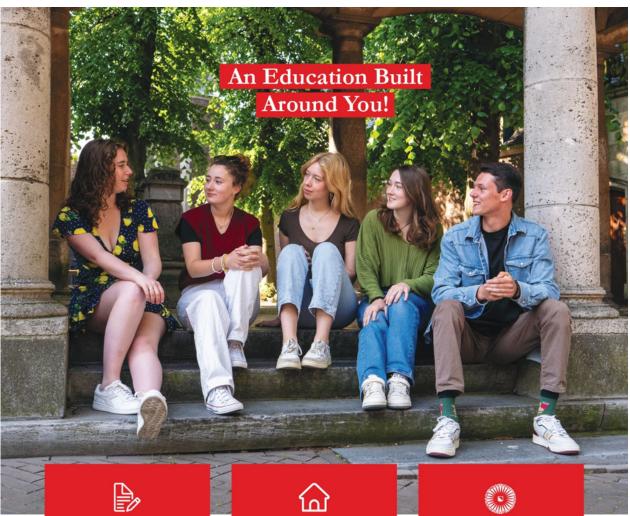
Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) offer a dynamic educational experience that combines theoretical learning with practical application. Students thriving in the UAS setting are usually those who value practical, hands-on learning experiences and are eager to apply their knowledge in real-world settings. They may have a strong interest in a specific industry or profession and are motivated to gain the practical skills and experience needed to succeed in that field. Through internships, projects, and collaborations with industry partners, students gain valuable real-world experience while developing critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills. With their fresh approach to education and strong connections to the professional world, UAS play a vital role in shaping the next generation of skilled professionals and leaders.

Research Universities, on the other hand, are known for their academic excellence, rigorous theoretical education, and focus on research and critical thinking. Students who are curious, analytical, and passionate about exploring complex academic questions and pushing the boundaries of knowledge within their chosen field are those who do well in the Research University environment. They may have a strong desire to engage in independent research and theoretical inquiry, driven by a fascination with discovery and innovation. By nurturing intellectual curiosity, critical thinking and independent inquiry, research universities play an important role in advancing academic knowledge and shaping the future of various industries and disciplines.

Finally, **University Colleges** offer a unique and interdisciplinary approach to higher education, combining the academic rigor of a traditional Research University with the intimacy of small class sizes and interactive teaching. University Colleges provide students with a broad-based liberal arts education that encourages exploration across multiple disciplines. Moreover, University Colleges often foster a strong sense of community and encourage students to engage in extracurricular activities, community service, and leadership opportunities. By offering a holistic and interdisciplinary educational experience, University Colleges empower students to become well-rounded individuals who are equipped to address complex challenges and make meaningful contributions to society.

College counselors are uniquely suited to encourage their students to look beyond the program title and explore the variety of educational experiences that the different types of institutions have to offer students. It is easy to conclude that there is something for every student who wishes to study in the Netherlands...they just have to find it.





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