



EVALUATING INDEPENDENT EDUCATION CONSULTANTS (IECS)

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Education Consultants
(IECs)

Careers in Sports

Is Going Test-Optional in
2024 a Good Idea?

IBOS: Nurturing the LD
superstars

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EVALUATING INDEPENDENT EDUCATION CONSULTANTS (IECS)

Navigating High School to Higher Education:

By
Ramya Modukuri
Director of Future Pathways
International Schools Partnership



Ramya Modukuri

Your child is in high school, and you are seeking guidance what to study, where to study and how to get there. You could try to sort it out yourself, and/or with help from your school counselor and/or engage an Independent Education Consultant. In this article we will help you decide what is best for you.

What is an IEC and do you need one?

An Independent Education Consultant (IEC) is someone who can advise your child on careers and colleges. Unlike agents, who receive commissions from universities, IECs function independently and can be counted upon for unbiased advice.

Do you need an IEC?

Start by asking the following questions:

1) What higher education destinations will your child be applying to?

The order of application complexity, approximately, is:

- 1.US highly selective / UK Oxbridge / Medicine abroad
- 2.Athletic recruitment and Portfolio-based programs like design, music and drama
- 3.US less selective / Europe university colleges / India new-age universities
- 4.UK less selective / Canada / Europe / Singapore / Hong Kong
- 5.Admissions based on national competitive exams or board exam grades

This complexity will correlate to the effort needed to understand, plan, and apply.

2) Does the school have counselors? What support can you expect from them?

Most schools still don't have guidance counselors. Those that do have counselor-student ratios ranging from 1:>200 to 1:<50. The level of support should improve with ratio. It is best to speak to the counselors and to recent alumni to understand what support to expect from the school.

3) How much charge are you and your child willing to take?

Even highly selective US applications are not rocket-science. A motivated child with supportive parents willing to spend the time and effort to equip themselves with the requirements, can navigate the application process themselves.

4) Do you have special circumstances or needs?

Families needing significant financial assistance, or for students with learning, physical, or behavioral challenges, specialized assistance can be very helpful in finding the right university.

Researching IECs

Before you approach IECs, it helps to reflect on the following:

1. What is your child's personality and learning style?
2. What do you want your child's college experience to be?
3. What are your values?
4. What are your constraints? Think financial, geographical, social support etc.

With those points in mind, here are some factors to consider when researching IECs:

1. Size – IECs range from one-person setups to large establishments with hundreds of employees. Larger isn't necessarily better; while they may have better processes and partnerships for SAT prep, internships, or profile development, the quality of the individual consultant helping you might not be any different from a one-person setup.
2. Cost – Most IECs have a rate card, some quite granular. Understand what is and is NOT included. Many won't include SAT/ACT preparation, Oxbridge and other technical interviews, financial aid application support, visa support etc. Some won't include detailed essay help.
3. Level of Support – Some IECs will cap support at a certain number of applications; others at a certain number of hours. Clarify the mode and frequency of communication and meetings with student and parent.
4. Background – Understand the organization's background and also that of the individual consultant assigned to you. Are they experienced or is this their first rodeo? If the latter, will they be paired up with an experienced consultant? With a large organization, how much access do you have to someone senior?
5. Value System – How do they evaluate the right fit universities for each child? Listen closely to the language they use and see if aligns with how you think. Does their website highlight FIT, but they throw in "Ivy League" in every other sentence? Are they able to understand your unique needs? What are their ethics?
6. Understanding of Local Market – Universities often have admissions officers (AO) dedicated to specific geographies, who understand the local context very well. An AO for India knows how Mumbai differs from Meerut, what 90% in CBSE or State Board means, why 11th grade marks may be much lower than expected board results etc. Local IECs know this, and will guide you more specifically than a foreign IEC. They also have better local networks to help you engage in activities relevant to your local context.
7. How current is their knowledge – Is the IEC a member of reputed organizations like AIIEC, IACAC, or IECA? Do they attend conferences and talk to university AOs? How do they keep themselves abreast of the latest trends?
8. Success Stories – Most established IECs have a good mix of strong placements worldwide. Some questions to ask are – how far back does the data they are showing go? How many universities, on average, do their clients apply to and what is their percentage acceptance rate? What is their yardstick for success? Reflect also on what success in this process would mean for you.

Red Flags

Watch out for these red flags and if you encounter one, RUN!

1. "Guarantees" of admission – No ethical IEC will guarantee admissions. If they do, then this is a Rick Singer type situation and you do not want to be a Times headline for the wrong reasons.
2. "You don't have to do anything" – What you are getting with an IEC is a guide, not a concierge. Anyone who makes it sound like you can sit back and relax while they take care of the entire application has questionable ethics.
3. Inability to answer basic questions about trends, requirements etc.
4. Unwillingness to discuss details behind success stories or student profiles
5. Massive over- or under-pricing relative to the market – While this is not necessarily a red flag, it is good to understand the reasons for this.

Post-Evaluation

1. Talk to others in your circle who used an IEC to understand their experience.
2. Even when working with an IEC, some critical aspects of the application rest in the hands of the school counsellor. Work with them as a team.
3. Treat your IECs with respect – paying someone for their service does not make them your servant.

Lastly, understand that it is your child's journey, not yours. While you will be heavily involved in some aspects of it, please trust your child enough to let them take ownership of their journey including the decision on who should guide them.



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We're your friendly neighborhood independent education consultants. As India's leading body of IECs, we serve as the industry's voice. With the student's best interest in our hearts, we're raising the bar for quality of service within all our practices. Online professional development workshops, college visits, trusted vendor networks, hosting admission officers, and an awesome annual conference - that's our thang!



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CAREERS IN SPORTS

A Game-Changer

By
Charushilla Narula
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On October 30, 2011 when the Budh International Circuit hosted the first Formula One race in India, it did not just host some of the finest racers in the world, it birthed track support engineers, speed photographers, celebrity managers, commentators, visualisers and even sound engineers! It's interesting to learn about Niharika Ghorpode, a young girl from Kolhapur and Mayo College Girls' School, Ajmer who started as a motorsport intern at an automotive magazine and went on to become India's first FI Paddock Journalist. To every naysayer, please note, it's possible!

Charushilla Narula

Sports is big business. It's important to find your niche.

According to the 2024 report, the global sport market was at \$440 billion in 2021, and by 2025, it is projected to reach nearly \$600 billion. From direct growth through media rights or via fields such as sports science, legalized sports betting, fantasy sport and little leagues to connected sectors such as fitness, wellbeing, healthcare and education, the pie is fairly large and this projection may be a bit conservative.

To put things in context, I reached out to one of my students who chose sports marketing and branding as his niche at the ESSEC Business School, France. Today, as the ESSEC Sports Chair 2024, Nandan Saraf highlights, "The recent trend of Drive to Survive and the use of OTT platforms to revive sports fan engagement in a sport like Formula 1 (has) basically revived the sport that was dying. Following this we could see a lot of other sports like Tennis, Football making Netflix specials to engage fans and target new audiences."

Opportunities in the field of Sports

India will be hosting the Olympics in 2036, there's no better time to build the ecosystem and encourage students to consider mapping their interests and aptitude with a connected career.

Your student may be an athlete and that pathway may begin with gully sports to playing for school to state, national and international-level journeys, but let's look at some interesting options that are related to sports. This is not an exhaustive summary of possibilities along with some university names, but it can be used to begin exploring.

Sports Analyst: According to MadAboutSports, a sports analyst is a person who studies sports analytical data like player performances, team assessment, business operations, scouting and recruitment, to determine one's strengths and weaknesses. Watch: Moneyball

Sports Management: At Loughborough University, Sports Management is co-taught by the School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences (currently ranked 1st in the world for sports-related subjects) and the School of Business and Economics to equip you with vital skills in marketing, organizational management, and accounting - all around managing sports.

Sports Psychology: PositivePsychology.com shares how the role of a sports psychologist 'in the success of top sportspeople is less about being more successful than others and increasingly about performing better than previously.' While there are a number of Bachelors options to choose from, there are a number of Master of Arts in Sport and Performance Psychology offered by universities in the United States, including at the University of Colorado, Denver.

Sports Physiologist: It's all about keeping those muscles agile and studying programs around Exercise Physiology and Rehabilitation or Health Sciences (Physiology and Neuroscience), University of Canberra or University of New South Wales or Western Australia could be a great place to start.

Sports Law: "With increasing stakes comes increased risks - and sports law is going to find a strong place as sponsorships, endorsements and marketing contracts become intrinsic to growth." Says Kala Anand, an International Higher-ed Strategist. OP Jindal Global University, in collaboration with the University of Queensland Law School, hosts a joint course on Sports Law and Governance. Internationally, there are a number of options from the Harvard Law School to Pepperdine and University of Miami where LLM programs in Sports Law are offered by legal experts who've spent years in the sector.

Sports Nutritionist: Meal plans, timings, and its coordination with training itineraries of athletes is a full-time job that's best managed by dieticians who understand health science and holistic well-being. While there are basic certifications available, practicing with a sports nutritionist for a few years does help build a deeper understanding of what works.

Interest / Subject	Aptitude / Skills	Possibility
Computer Science, Statistics, Mathematics	Critical Thinking Decision-making	Sports Analyst Sports Management
Psychology, Fitness, Kinesiology	Communication Compassion Patience	Sports Psychology Wellbeing Coach Sports Physiologist
Legal Studies, History, Business Studies	Written Communication Logical Reasoning Critical Thinking	Sports Law Conflict Manager Sports Management
Biology, Chemistry, Humanities, Home Science	Communication Creativity	Sports Nutritionist Sports Science Sports Artist

Figure 1: This representation is based on guiding a number of students. It is open to individual counselor interpretation and research.

Clearly, the scope is endless. Why then, is Physical education (PE) still considered a free period or an easy scoring tag-along subject at most schools with an Indian curriculum. As a parent and counselor, having experienced the expanse of a school such as the Isha Home School (IHS), Coimbatore (now also streaming as part of The Great Indian Residential Schools), I'm of the firm understanding that schools are laboratories, not just for STEM related learning but also for exploring oneself on the field, on stage and in life, in general. Where else will the student learn to win and lose, fall and get back up with grace! IHS is one of the few schools where students not only learn Kalaripayattu, an ancient martial art that builds inner resilience, but also a space where academic orientation is built around physical, mental and spiritual well being.

The Fun Conversation ;)

How to talk to parents about building a career as a sportsperson or around a sport you love?

Passion, Preparation and Parents: As college counselors, we meet with passion everyday. It could be dance, music, acting, or a sport; not all are willing to take the path less traveled, gain mastery and build a life around it. In getting ready for a related field, one may even need to study some subjects that might seem unnecessary (especially to a sports person). A college degree is not always a means to an end. You study to become a better thinker, ideator, and more, and you also learn some skills.

Vipul Bhargava, the Founder of GILT Education and parent to an aspiring cricketer notes that "Building a career as a sportsman is extremely hard given the competitive nature and the sheer competition... A true and honest assessment of oneself is critical to distinguish an interest versus a passion."

Conversation Part 1: Talk to the student and the parent about their overall willingness to go all the way. There is no one-way to deal with a parent who's personal perception about a career in sports is narrow, but that's where your assessment along with your willingness to be this student's cheerleader, can help.

Research is key: College, country, course, career - students must learn to filter their options and choose what truly matters to them. Refer Figure 1.

Most would agree that sports such as cricket and football are oversubscribed. Encouraging sports such as Track and Field, Swimming, or Basketball since they "are timing based sports and hence its easier to measure performance" can increase chances of future success says Sports and Education Consultant, Vikram Anand. He's quick to add that "unfortunately (the sports) lack adequate coaching and training facilities in our country."

Conversation Part 2: Help the family put their dreams or perspective in context. A thorough understanding of the sport / field of interest will help.

In conclusion, sports is not just a niche career for exploration, it's a commitment - a unique chance at encouraging kids to be kids, on and off-the-field. We, as counselors, can do our best at making sports-related conversations mainstream. Do I hear you say, but I don't play squash or tennis like some enthusiasts I know; well, find your reason to learn and read more. My reason: I'm advocating for women in sports leadership positions, a figure that's at an abysmal 5% or less, even when close to 40% of sports participants are women.

Counselors, are you game?

IS GOING TEST-OPTIONAL IN 2024 A GOOD IDEA?

Different facets of adapting a test-optional policy for College Admissions

By
Ashish Kumar
Founder, Tutela Education Pvt Ltd.



Standardized testing traditionally played a key role in college admissions, objectively measuring student's academic abilities. Until 2019, over 90% of admitted students typically submitted standardized test scores, with more than 2.2 million students taking the SAT and approximately 1.8 million taking the ACT worldwide. However, recent years have seen a shift towards test-optional policies in U.S. college admissions, sparking debate over the relevance of standardized tests.

Ashish Kumar

Rationale Behind Test-Optional Policies

1. Educational Disruptions: In 2020, the pandemic led to over 1.2 million students facing test cancellations, revealing the need for flexible assessment methods.

2. Holistic Approach: 85% of college admissions officers find holistic admissions effective, considering academic and extracurricular achievements, reflecting a shift in admission criteria.

3. Inequities in Testing: Black and Hispanic students score lower on average compared to White and Asian counterparts, indicating systemic disparities within standardized testing.

4. Equitable Admissions: Students from low-income backgrounds tend to score lower on standardized tests, emphasizing the importance of equitable admissions practices.

5. UC Report: High school grades are stronger predictors of college performance than standardized test scores, challenging the overreliance on standardized tests in admissions decisions.

A Pendulum Swing: The Return to Test Requirements

In response to test-optional policies, Ivy League schools have seen an increase in admitted students without SAT/ACT scores. Data from the Harvard Crimson shows this percentage rose from 4.6% in 2019 to 10.8% in 2023.

However, there's now a shift back towards requiring standardized tests. Several prominent institutions like Brown, Dartmouth, Harvard, Yale, and MIT have reinstated SAT/ACT requirements.

But Why This Sudden Switch?

Test-optional policies were widely adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic, but emerging data suggests these policies might not deliver on their promises:

1. Consistency and Comparability: Standardized tests offer a consistent and comparable measure of academic ability across diverse educational backgrounds. In contrast, GPAs can vary due to differences in curriculum and grading standards.

2. Economic and Demographic Disparities: A 2021 study by the University of Georgia found that test-optional policies might decrease diversity instead of increasing it.

3. Impact on Student Preparation: Test prep fosters discipline and essential skills. Brown University President Christina Paxson noted that higher SAT/ACT scores correlate with fewer academic difficulties.

Students Percentage that submitted their SAT/ACT Scores (2020-2023):

Year	Harvard University	Yale University	University of Pennsylvania Brown University	Cornell University
2020	<90%	<90%	<90% <90%	<90%
2021	54% SAT, 33% ACT	≈55%	≈58% ≈60%	≈57%
2022	52% SAT, 22% ACT	≈50%	≈55% ≈58%	≈53%

2023 48% SAT, 25% ACT

≈53% ≈57% ≈59% ≈55%

Sources: Harvard College Admissions, Yale College Admissions, Penn Admissions, Brown Daily Herald, Cornell University Admissions

Trends:

- The initial significant drop in 2021 reflects the early adaptation to test-optional policies.
- A slight increase in 2023 suggests that despite the test-optional policies, many students continue to submit their test scores, indicating that standardized tests still play a role in college admissions. This trend could be the reason colleges are reinstating standardized test requirements.

The Advantages of Standardized Tests

Reinstating standardized tests is seen not just as a return to tradition but as a move supported by empirical data:

1. Predictive Power: SAT scores combined with high school GPA better predict college success compared to GPA alone, enhancing the correlation from 0.5 to 0.8.

2. Access and Opportunity: Standardized tests can help identify talented students from underprivileged backgrounds, giving them recognition in college admissions.

3. Scholarship Allocation: Merit-based scholarships consider both GPA and standardized test scores, allowing deserving students access to financial aid.

4. Educational Standards: Standardized tests provide educators and policymakers with valuable data to assess and enhance national educational standards, highlighting the areas of improvement.

Conclusion

Standardized tests offer clear advantages in college admissions, providing an objective measure of academic readiness and enhancing educational equity. A Standardised Test Score is achieved, unlike predicted GPAs, proving the student’s academic excellence. The reinstation of Standardised Tests signals a growing recognition of their value. Furthermore, the trend is expected to increase in 2024 as colleges recognize the significance of standardized tests, reaffirming their role in college admissions.

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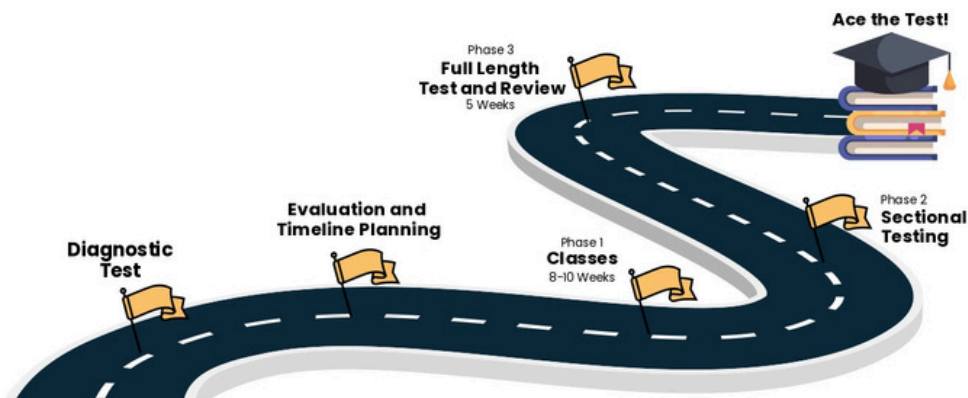
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IBOS: NURTURING THE LD SUPERSTARS

How IBOS Online Schools caters to students with special needs

By
Bharat Mundra
Director
Indo-Bharat Online School



Bharat Mundra

Every academic year, we welcome students with diverse learning needs, including those with special abilities. At IBOS, we cater to a spectrum of learning disabilities, ranging from mild ADHD and autism to those who are slow learners or require constant attention and motivation. As an online school, we offer personalized live classes conducted by skilled tutors, ensuring individualized attention. We understand the significance of nurturing each kid, recognizing that genuine care and support significantly contribute to their development and emotional well-being.

Remarkably, many learners with special needs excel in creative pursuits such as origami, playdough, and crafting paper flowers. We take immense pride in the success stories like those of Shiven Kumar, who not only completed his Grade 12 with IBOS but also launched his venture, 'Chocolate Valley by Shiven'. These achievements highlight that with the right support and guidance, kids with special needs can reach remarkable heights comparable to their peers.

IBOS Model: Examining the Effectiveness of Online Education for Students Aged 13–18 with Specific Learning Disabilities

1. Introduction

Learning is a lifelong journey, crucial for individual development and psychological growth. Schooling plays a pivotal role in this journey, shaping one's academic skills and self-perception. However, for the ones with learning difficulties, navigating academic challenges can impact their mental health and peer relationships. Thus, early diagnosis and understanding of these difficulties are paramount for tailored support.

2. Conceptual Framework

The term "learning disability," coined in 1963, describes academic challenges in children without mental retardation. These difficulties, influenced by genetic, functional, or environmental factors, often manifest during schooling. Each child with a learning disability exhibits unique struggles, necessitating individualized evaluation and support.

3. Process

At IBOS, our mentoring team meticulously crafts training programs for teachers. These programs emphasize understanding and addressing the needs of those with special learning difficulties. By focusing on tailored learning and evaluation methods, we ensure comprehensive support for every learner.

4. Conclusion

Online schooling presents both advantages and challenges for those afflicted with ADHD. Enumerated below are some considerations.

This model presents several advantages. Firstly, it offers a flexible environment that caters to the diverse needs and learning paces of individuals. Secondly, they can progress at their own speed, dedicating more time to challenging subjects while efficiently grasping concepts. Thirdly, this kind of schooling typically provides a less distracting setting compared to traditional classrooms, fostering better focus and concentration. Additionally, such platforms offer customizable learning experiences and interactive resources, catering to various learning styles, including those of students with ADHD.

On the other hand, online learning also presents a few challenges. Firstly, it requires self-discipline and organization, which can be difficult for those who struggle with time management and maintaining focus without external guidance. Secondly, the reduced opportunities for social engagement may hinder their social and emotional development. Moreover, while technology aids learning, it can also be a source of distraction, leading to off-task behavior and decreased productivity. Finally, ADHD kids often require additional support to navigate these platforms effectively and develop study skills suitable for the digital environment.

In determining the suitability of online schooling for students with ADHD, it's essential to consider their unique needs and preferences. While some may thrive in these settings with proper support, others may benefit more from traditional classrooms supplemented with targeted interventions. Ultimately, personalized support and a holistic approach are vital for optimizing the educational experience of students with special needs.



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THE FUTURE OF BUSINESS ANALYTICS

How Syracuse's iSchool is Leading the Way

By

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Amy Sloane-Garris

In the rapidly evolving landscape of business analytics, where data is king and technology reigns supreme, Syracuse University's iSchool stands as a beacon of innovation and excellence. With its forward-thinking curriculum, cutting-edge research initiatives, and immersive learning experiences, the iSchool is shaping the future of business analytics education and preparing students to thrive in the digital age.

At the heart of the iSchool's success lies its commitment to bridging the gap between theory and practice. Students at the iSchool are not just passive learners; they are active participants in the dynamic intersection of academia and industry. Through hands-on projects, internships, and industry collaborations, they gain practical experience that is invaluable in today's competitive job market.

One of the hallmarks of the iSchool's approach to education is its emphasis on experiential learning. From the ICE Box, an open space for innovation and entrepreneurship, to NEXIS, a research laboratory run by undergraduate students, students have access to a wealth of resources and opportunities to apply their knowledge in real-world settings. Collaboration is not just encouraged; it is ingrained in the fabric of the iSchool experience, mirroring the collaborative nature of the business analytics field itself.

But perhaps what sets the iSchool apart is its global perspective. Through immersive trips to major cities like New York, Boston, and Chicago, as well as international programs like AsiaTech and EuropeTech, students gain firsthand insights into how business analytics is practiced on a global scale. They visit large organizations such as Interpol, Nestle, and Heineken, gaining the real behind-the-scenes experience that is crucial in today's interconnected world.

Another key strength of the iSchool is its focus on entrepreneurship. From consulting to corporate jobs to student-led startups, the iSchool nurtures a vibrant community of entrepreneurs who are empowered to pursue their passions and make a difference in the world. This vibrant community of student entrepreneurs is a testament to the iSchool's commitment to providing students with the skills they need to succeed in a rapidly changing business landscape.

Looking ahead, the future of business analytics is bright, and the iSchool is leading the way. With its innovative curriculum, hands-on learning experiences, global perspective, and focus on entrepreneurship, the iSchool is preparing the next generation of business leaders to harness the power of data and technology to drive meaningful change. As businesses increasingly rely on data-driven insights to make strategic decisions, the iSchool stands as a testament to the transformative power of education in driving innovation and change.



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