



US Education Landscape

By Jackie Christopher

In recent years, there have been changes in the education trends in the US, particularly in higher education, where standardized testing is no longer mandatory for admission due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This has made it harder for US students to enter universities, which in turn provides an opportunity for UK universities to attract these students who are seeking alternative pathways for higher education.

Since many US universities no longer require standardized testing, such as the ACT and the SAT, it has forced them to look at new ways of admitting students. UK universities can capitalize on this by highlighting their own admission processes, which are less reliant on additional factors (supplemental essays, work experience, volunteer experience, leadership experience), and focus more on the student's academic profile.

Even though this information presents itself as a positive opportunity, US students are also faced with challenges from UK university admissions requiring standardized testing (specifically AP exams) as a determining factor for admission.

For students to prepare for AP exams, students need to plan their coursework starting in 10th grade. Students who didn't have the opportunity to plan for AP exams previously had the opportunity to take the SAT II Subject Tests as a substitute to fulfil the university's AP exam requirement. Since the discontinuation of SAT II Subject Tests in January 2021, this has made UK study more difficult for students to consider.

In addition, many elite private schools have abolished or are looking at abolishing AP exams in their curriculum. A recent study done in July 2022 by The National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) collected 163 responses from private college counselors across the US on their school's AP system and how they view UK universities. The survey found that 58.8% of schools do not offer AP classes or exams, yet 62% of the counselors said that their students expressed interest in UK universities.

Over 47% of counselors said that the UK's testing requirements were a significant deterrent to the student's interest and 16% said their students did not apply due to the UK's standardized testing requirements. There is potential for UK universities to receive more applicants and enrolments especially from private high-achieving high schools, however, the barrier lies from the UK's entry requirements for undergraduate admission.

Overall, the changes in education trends in the US present an opportunity for UK universities to attract more students from this market. By adapting their admission requirements to meet the changing needs of the market, UK universities can capitalize on this opportunity and increase their enrolment of US students.

In addition, highlighting the unique benefits of studying in the UK by offering virtual open days, providing tailored information on the admission process, and partnering with educational institutions in the US to provide guidance to prospective students.

