



SHAIKHA HESSA GIRLS' SCHOOL



**High School
College Counseling
Handbook**



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Office Information and Contacts

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College Counseling Office

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The College Counseling Office is staffed from September through June, with minimal office coverage in July and August. During the summer months, when classes are not in session, the college counselor and IB coordinator can be reached via email.

CEEB CODE: 654018

IB SCHOOL CODE: 2895



Mission Statement, Beliefs and Expectations

Mission Statement

The College Counseling Office maintains close working relationships with counseling and college enrollment professionals. The counselor offers their expertise to educate, counsel and encourage students throughout the post-secondary application process. The counselor assists students to set realistic and achievable college admission goals for themselves while encouraging each student's individuality.

Beliefs

The College Counselor works with the families and the SHGS communities to:

- Recognize each student as an individual, and to support each student's sense of dignity and self-worth.
- Support SHGS students in identifying their personal strengths and align them with their university options.
- Assist students in developing the necessary skills to take responsibility for their own decisions, and help them understand how to make important decisions affecting their future.

Expectations

From the College Counselor

- To guide and support the student throughout the college admission process
- Assist students in preparing an application list of colleges that is most suitable for them.
- Clearly identify tasks and deadlines for students and parents.
- To have an open door policy and is always willing to listen students.

From the Students

- To pay attention to all deadlines throughout the college admission process.
- To be honest and listen with an open mind.
- To consider college counselor's recommendation on colleges.
- To allow the college counselor in assisting the student in becoming self-sufficient and self-reliant.

From the Parents

- Listen to their child with an open mind
- To be helpful by encouraging their child and giving them constructive feedback
- Encourage their child to communicate with colleges directly and with the college counselor.

The Four Years

Graduation Requirements

Students must complete a minimum of 28 credits to graduate. A minimum of 7.5 credits is required each year in Grades 9 through 12. Each core subject is given 200 minutes of instructional time per week. IB higher-level courses are given 240 minutes of instructional time per week. The school year is 36 weeks in length consisting of two 18-week semesters. Grade reports are issued at the end of each nine-week session.

Graduation Requirements Class of 2013 and 2014

Required Courses	Credits	
	2013	2014
English 9, 10, 11, 12	4	4
Arabic 9, 10, 11, 12	4	4
Mathematics	3	4
Science (includes Health)	3.5	4
Islamic Studies	2 (0.5 each year)	2 (0.5 each year)
Social Studies	3	3 or more
National Social Studies	2	1
Computer Studies	1	1
Physical Education	1.5	1
Electives	4	4
Total	28	28

Grade 9 Timeline

Studies have shown that students in the 9th grade are not quite ready for the college search process. That is why the SHGS approach to the college process is an informal one at this point. The college counselor is available at all times for any inquiries students and parents may have.

September-October

- The counselor will meet with students as a group to discuss opportunities they have in and out of SHGS.
- The counselor will discuss the importance of decision-making and how it may have an effect on their permanent record.
- The counselor discusses how to make the most out of SHGS education.
- The counselor assists students in setting goal the 9th grade year.

March

- Students receive counseling on course selection.

April

- Counselor meets with students to discuss and set goals for 10th grade.
- Complete “Extracurricular Activity Resume”

Grade 10 Timeline

This year, testing will become one of the major activities for the 10th grade students. They will be taking the PSAT in October and learn how to interpret their results. They will create an account and access “MY College Quick Start™” where they can view their PSAT and begin the college search process.

September

- The counselor will meet with students to set academic, personal, and extracurricular goals for grade 10.
- The counselor will discuss the importance of decision-making and maintaining a strong record.
- The counselor will remind students to keep track of their activities on their “Extracurricular Activity Resume”.
- The counselor will discuss and practice the PSAT with students.

October

- Students will take the PSAT in mid October.

December

- PSAT results are sent home along with a score report.
- Counselor will guide students with accessing “MY College Quick Start™”

February

- Counselor will provide students with the resources available for college research.
- Students attend Spring College Fair.
- Students begin making a college list.

March

- The counselor assists students in course selection for grade 11.

April

- Students Update their "Extracurricular Activity Form".
- Students register for the SAT and SAT Subject Test online for the Fall.
- Students register for the TOEFL online for the Fall.

Grade 11 Timeline

The 11th grade is considered the most important year in the college admission process. Colleges and universities look at all four years of high school with emphasis on the last two years. The college admission officers look for students who have taken a strong and challenging curriculum, one that consists of challenging courses and extracurricular activities. The officers also take into consideration how well a student progresses, and how well they maintain a good record.

September

- Register for the SAT, SAT Subject Test, and TOEFL if they haven't done so in grade 10.
- Register for the IELTS.

October-November

- Take the SAT, TOEFL, and IELTS
- Attend a college fair.

December

- Students fill out the Students Questionnaire, and parents fill out the Parents Questionnaire.
- Over the break students research colleges and universities.

January

- Introduce the Common Application, UCAS, UAC, and OUAC.
- Register for the SAT, SAT Subject, TOFL, and IELTS if the student has not taken the tests yet.

February

- Take the SAT, TOEFL, and IELTS.
- Students who are eligible apply for the CPISP.
- One-on-one meetings with the counselor to review, evaluate, and discuss the questionnaire, standardized tests, and college interests.
- Research colleges and universities and develop a list of ten that interests the student.
- The counselor discusses with students college and university interviewing techniques.

March

- Take the SAT, TOEFL, and IELTS.
- The counselor meets with students to discuss course selections for the 12th grade.

April

- Take TOEFL, and IELTS.
- Students refine their lists of colleges and universities.

May-June

- Take the SAT, SAT Subject Test, TOEFL, and IELTS.
- Students will register for the Fall standardized tests if they do not like their scores.
- Counselors assist students with making plans for college visits
- Students will choose and meet with teachers who will write their letter of recommendation.

Grade 12 Timeline

Students at their final year of high school must be aware of all deadlines. They will be applying to different universities with different deadlines. They have to make sure that they have registered and taken all the important and necessary tests. Test scores MUST be sent directly to the school of their choice from the testing centers. Colleges and universities will NOT accept scores sent by the student or by the school.

September

- Register and take the SAT, SAT Subject Test, TOEFL, and IELTS if necessary.
- Update the “Extracurricular Activity Form”.
- The counselor, with the assistance from the English teachers will guide students on writing their college essays. The counselor or teacher will give the students feedback.
- Set up your accounts with the Common Application, UCAS, UAC, and OUAC.
- Check for application deadlines for the universities of your choice.
- If students are applying to schools that are not available on the Common Application, UCAS, UAC, or OUAC, then they have to be sure to learn of the application requirements of the school of their choice.
- Students must request financial aid information from the colleges they are interested in.
- Students research, with the assistance of the college counselor, scholarship opportunities.

October

- Take the SAT, SAT Subject Test, TOEFL, and IELTS if necessary.
- Students MUST send their application via UCAS to Oxford or Cambridge, and if they are majoring in medicine, dentistry, and veterinary medicine/science by mid-October.
- Students attend Fall college fair.
- Students refine their college list.

November

- Take the SAT, SAT Subject Test, TOEFL, and IELTS if necessary.
- Students must complete their college essays, by having it proof read.
- Students who are applying early should complete their application and have them mailed with their transcripts.
- Students should put in their requests with the appropriate testing center to send all necessary standardized and English language proficiency tests to the schools of their choice.

December-January

- Students must confirm with the universities they have applied to that they have received their application and all important documents.

- If a student receives an early decision response from the university, she must notify the college counselor.
- Students who have already applied and received their response must continue to work hard because a college may call the counselor to request for updated grade.
- Students should complete their application and have them mailed with their transcripts.
- Students should put in their requests with the appropriate testing center to send all necessary standardized and English language proficiency tests to the schools of their choice if they have done so.
- Students must send all applications that meet the January deadlines.

March-April

- Students must notify the college counselor as university responses come in regardless of the decision is.
- IB students send requests for results service to universities and colleges in all countries, except Australia, New Zealand, Canada and USA.

May-June

- Students must make a deposit to the college they are enrolling and complete all enrollment procedures.
- Students should notify the colleges they been accepted to on whether or not they will be attending.
- Students apply for Ministry of Education Scholarship.
- IB students send requests for results service to universities and colleges in Canada and USA.

Standardized Tests

PSAT

The PSAT, Preliminary SAT, is a test that helps students practice for the SAT Test. Students take the PSAT once in their 10th grade year. The PSAT score report is sent to the student sometime in December. The Score Report provides the students and parents with a detailed analysis of the student's performance. It stresses on areas where the student needs to focus when later taking the SAT.

The College Board provides students with "My College Quick Start™" program, free of charge, to all students who have taken the PSAT. Students can view their score report on "My College Quick Start™" and begin a study plan that is tailored for her based on her performance on the PSAT.

SAT and SAT Subject Test

The Sat and SAT Subject Tests are tools that assess a students academic readiness for college. Although a student's transcript is the most important factor in the admission process, studies have shown that a student with a high performance on their transcript and SAT score forecasts college success. At SHGS, all students are encouraged to take the SAT test and given the option to take the SAT Subject Test. If a student is planning on applying for the Ministry of Education scholarship, one of their requirements is to take the SAT.

The SAT Subject Test assesses the student's knowledge in a specific subject area. Students must keep in mind that SAT Subject Tests are not offered in every test date. Students may check with the college counselor or online at sat.collegeboard.org. At the website, students can practice for the SAT and SAT Subject Test online.

TOEFL and IELTS

The TOEFL is a test that measures ones ability use and understand English at a university level. The test assesses a student's performance in listening, reading, speaking, and writing in English. There are two formats for the TOEFL:

- TOEFL iBT, which is taken via the internet, and the
- TOEFL PBT, which is the paper bases test.

The test format a student takes depends on the test center and what they have available.



IELTS

IELTS is the International English Language Testing System that tests language skills - listening, reading, writing, and speaking. The speaking test is a face-to-face interview with an examiner. The test examines ones ability to communicate in English in real life situations. There are two formats available; students will be taking the Academic test format.

Test Registration

PSAT

The college counselor will be administering the PSAT and registration will not be required.

SAT and SAT Subject Test

Students can register for the test at: <http://sat.collegeboard.org>. They are required to create an account before registering for the SAT. It is crucial for students to register with the same spelling of their names as it is in their passport.

TOEFL

Students can register for the TOEFL at: <http://www.ets.org/toefl/ibt/register/>. They must register as early as possible due to seats getting filled fairly quickly.

IELTS

Students can register at: <https://ielts.britishcouncil.org/bahrain>. Payments have to be made within five working days of the registration at the British Council. IF payment is not made, then the registration will be canceled.



Researching Colleges and Universities

When researching for colleges and universities, students must do it with an open mind. They must consider that there may be more than one university that could be the right choice for them. The college search process is not a competition. It is about finding the best school for the student. There are several factors a student must consider when researching for the right one. The following factors will assist the student in narrowing down their list of choices:

- **Location:** A student must decide on whether she wants to study in her home country or abroad. If she chooses to study abroad, she must consider the culture and language of the country she intends to live in during her college years.
- **Major:** Students need to make sure that the schools they are considering have the major they are interested in studying.
- **Campus Life:** Students may want to consider if students stay on campus on the weekend or if life is centered off campus. They may want to look at how diverse the student body is as well.
- **International Programs:** Many universities offer a study abroad program where the student studies in another university in a different country for semester.
- **Finances:** Student must look into the cost of the education and the cost of living in the country where they will be studying.

Applying to Colleges

Colleges and universities have different admission requirements. Below is list of requirements for universities categorized by region:

- **BAHRAIN:**
 - High school transcripts
 - TOEFL or IELTS scores

- **AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST**
 - High school transcripts
 - IB results
 - TOEFL or IELTS scores
 - SAT scores
 - Personal essay
 - Letters of recommendation

- **UNITED KINGDOM AND IRELAND**
 - High school transcripts
 - Predicted I.B. results
 - SAT and TOEFL or IELTS scores
 - Personal statement
 - Recommendation letters
 - Letter of reference from the College Counselor
 - Interviews or Written exam (for Oxford or Cambridge)
 - Career-related work experience especially when applying for the medical programs.

- **U.S.A.**
 - High school transcript
 - Predicted I.B. results
 - SAT and TOEFL scores
 - Extra-curricular activities
 - Personal essays
 - Recommendation letters
 - Interviews and SAT Subject Test (depending on the university)



- **CANADA**

- High school transcript
- Predicted I.B. results
- SAT and TOEFL scores

- **AUSTRALIA**

- High school transcript
- Predicted I.B. results
- SAT and TOEFL scores



Scholarships

Crown Prince's International Scholarship Program

The Crown Prince's International Scholarship Program (CPISP) provides Bahraini students with the opportunity to study abroad at international universities and colleges. Each year, the CPISP offers ten scholarships. It is an all expenses paid scholarship, including travel and living. The following are the requirements for the 2013 scholarship:

- Students must have Bahraini citizenship
- Students have to be enrolled in the 11th grade
- A cumulative grade of 97% or above for grades 10 and first semester of grade 11

The deadline for submitting the application will be in February or March. The Scholarship Office of the Crown Prince Court will announce the exact date on their website, <http://www.cpisp.bh>.

Ministry of Education Scholarship

The Ministry of Education provides Bahraini students a scholarship for universities in Bahrain or abroad. At the end of the graduate's school year, students have the opportunity to apply for the ministry's scholarship. The following are the requirements:

- Students must have Bahraini citizenship
- A cumulative grade of 90% for the grades 10 to 12
- SAT scores of 1000+

The ministry has provided an online service for applying for the scholarship on the e-government website, <http://www.bahrain.bh>. The service will be available in June.