



European School LLC  
შპს ევროპული სკოლა

# The European School The Comprehensive University and Career Counseling Program



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## **Philosophy**

University and Career Counseling is at the heart of the interdisciplinary and innovative educational practices of the European School (ES). Committed to providing equal and inclusive access, the Office supports ES students in their university applications and career planning.

The nucleus of university and career counseling is the student. Each action is directed at encouraging, guiding, and preparing our students to become the best versions of themselves. The preparation in this sense does not begin or end with college applications. Our understanding of the counseling process stretches further.

At the University and Career Counseling Office (UCCO), we believe in systemic guidance. Its core premise rests on the idea that university and career counseling involves a broad spectrum of interconnected possibilities. Promoting the university and career readiness of our students requires tactics that target their short and long-term goals. To create solid foundations for bigger and more challenging academic, extracurricular, and career adventures, our counseling programs (University Guidance, Essay Writing, and Career Readiness) focus on individual needs and aspirations.

Intentional collaboration with students begins as early as the first meeting. We encourage them to take ownership of the process and offer them plentiful guidance as long as they are in charge of their stories. Support is not a word we take for granted.

At UCCO, we believe in empowering healthy ambitions through the idea of the “right fit”, which is less about the result and more about the process. Understanding this notion promotes better decision-making in all areas of university and career counseling. Endorsing the “right fit” helps us put sound practices above aspirational and unrealistic expectations.

The university admissions process is an opportunity for our students to take responsible actions and learn to navigate stress and confusion. The most significant decisions take thoughtful effort. Our ultimate desire is for our students to become autonomous and reflective individuals who bring valuable insights into every room they walk in.

With this philosophy, University and Career Counseling (UCCO) enhances the educational experience of our students and promotes the act of learning as a perpetual endeavor.

The comprehensive university and career counseling program at ES consists of the following components: University Guidance, The Essay Writing Program, and The Career Readiness. The number of meetings and programming for each component are set by the office every year, following the general principles and rules outlined below:

## **University Guidance**

The University Guidance Program at UCCO aims to educate college-going cohorts on the notion of the right fit, ultimately helping them arrive at a university list that distributes risk and opportunity in their favor. School visits by the world's top universities, constant exposure to the latest trends in college admissions, and data-driven approaches help UCCO streamline the pre-application preparation and the application processes.

UCCO advice and insights shared with students and families/guardians are recommendations based on best global practice. Ultimately, the decisions are made by students and families/guardians, who take responsibility for the outcome.

In cases when internal school deadlines for finalizing application lists, securing supporting documents, and progressing with the application process are communicated with students, it is their responsibility to follow through to ensure timely submissions.

## **The Essay Writing Program**

The Essay Writing Program is part of the University and Career Counseling Office (UCCO) at European School. The Program aims to support, guide, and assist students with college essays.

Our primary goal is to help students navigate both challenges and opportunities associated with essay writing. We aim for our students to showcase their personal stories, achievements, and activities in a coherent writing style.

## **The Program Overview**

At the University and Career Counseling Office (UCCO) we believe that writing is an essential skill required for any future aspirations. Therefore, we expect college-bound students to engage with the Program early on and follow the guidelines thoroughly.

With a carefully crafted curriculum and instructional individual sessions, the Program is designed to advance the writing capabilities of each student. Similarly, the purpose is to create foundational knowledge for ES students from the 11<sup>th</sup> grade so that by the time the application season arrives they are able to:

- A) Correctly identify the type of writing required by the colleges on their list.
- B) Create a list of the essays they need to write.
- C) Begin the outline of their Common Application Personal Essay (if applicable).
- D) Begin the outline of their UCAS writing (if applicable).
- E) Begin the outline of their university motivation letters (if applicable).
- F) Perform thorough research on the universities on their list.
- G) Fully understand the writing guidelines of each essay category.

H) Comprehend the role of essays in college applications.

Each purpose mentioned above is directed at enhancing the learning effectiveness of our students. Ultimately, by the time they are seniors, we want them to be in charge of their writing process.

## **Program Methodology**

### *a. Individual Meetings*

Each essay requires careful attention.

During individual sessions, students work with the College Essay Writing Coach to brainstorm, draft, and revise their college essays. The Office aims to address the specific writing needs of each student to assist them in meeting the essential criteria for every essay. Timely and systemic preparation for each college essay is of utmost importance; therefore, each student is strongly encouraged to submit the assignments on time and notify UCCO team members in case of any delay.

Individual Meetings with the 12<sup>th</sup> grade students begin in the summer between junior and senior year. Only those students who have submitted the end-of-the-year assignments to the Office and have meaningfully participated in UCCO programming receive individual coaching.

### **The procedure:**

1. Each meeting is arranged in advance. Google Calendar invitation is sent to the student. Meetings can be online or offline.
2. In case of any changes, the student must notify the College Essay Writing Coach in advance. Any form of non-communication will lead to the cancellation of the meeting without further notice.
3. The College Essay Writing Coach will contact the student about the next available slot.
4. Individual meetings usually last from 15 minutes to an hour, depending on the stage of writing.
5. Each draft has to be submitted on the day before the meeting by 17:00 PM to ensure there is enough time for feedback.
6. If the student misses the assignment submission deadline, the College Essay Writing Coach reserves the right to reschedule the meeting.
7. Reminders about the meeting and the submission are sent to the students via email before the meeting.
8. The comments on the drafts are available on Google Documents. The document is shared with the student, College Essay Writing Coach, and the members of the UCCO. Each member of the Office is authorized to see the draft and offer editing suggestions as they see fit. Any other editor needs to be approved by the Office.

### *B. Group Writing Workshops*

Group writing workshops are integral to the curriculum of the Essay Writing Program. We place strong emphasis on in-class assignments, which involve individual and group work. The workshop exercises and writing activities improve creative expression, analytical thinking, and preparation for the first outlines.

Attendance at group writing workshops is strongly encouraged.

1. 11th grade students are notified about the dates of the group workshops by the end of the first academic semester.
2. Assignments for each group workshop must be completed and submitted according to the guidelines.

### *C. Essay Revision Process*

The overall purpose of the individual sessions is to provide feedback and to construct the revision process on a case-by-case basis.

1. The students must submit each essay draft according to the deadlines specified by UCCO team members.
2. Each draft is assessed according to the specific college and essay requirements.
3. Students are encouraged to ask questions and engage with the College Essay Writing Coach during the individual meetings.
4. Students are encouraged to reach out during the rewriting process.
5. We encourage each student to write in their authentic voices. Nevertheless, if a student chooses to incorporate AI language, any error during the admissions process is the responsibility of the student.
6. The Office reserves the right to stop the revision process and individual meetings if a student receives unethical writing help from third parties.

### **Future academic writing toolkit**

At UCCO, we believe in promoting a university-going culture that lasts beyond the application season. That is why, at the end of the senior year, each student will receive a digital resource pack with books, articles, links, and exercises to assist them in their academic writing endeavors.

### **The Career Readiness Program**

Equally important to the University Guidance and the Essay Writing is the Career Readiness Program. While usually identified as relevant for college graduates, we believe the demand for career readiness starts earlier. That is why, as part of our comprehensive counseling program, career preparation takes its rightful place.

## **The Program Overview**

The decision-making process about career opportunities should be based on sound judgment, the analysis of relevant information, self-assessment, and the basic knowledge of key concepts. Based on these principles, the Office has incorporated career-related modules in its program: digital literacy, interview preparation, and written communication.

UCCO has launched a partnership with EvolveCareers, an EdTech company that supports young people as they bridge the gap between education and the workforce. Through online learning, EvolveCareers focuses on developing some of the essential skills in career preparation.

**Each student in grades 10-12 will be provided open access to the program's resources and is responsible for organizing their own learning process. UCCO will have access to data on student performance to monitor their progress.**

### **College-bound students are generally expected to:**

- Actively participate in meetings, sessions, and/or college/university fairs organized by the Office.
- Work on assignments provided by the Office (for instance: tasks that are designed to brainstorm and explore personal essay ideas).
- Actively participate in the college/university search to develop a list of colleges/universities that are the best possible fit; also, understand the difference between Dream, Target, and Safety colleges/universities and have the awareness that while we do encourage our students to dream big, we also want them to be realistic, evaluate their academic and/or extracurricular performance and financial situation objectively and always have a safety net to fall back on.
  - Dream colleges/universities – extremely selective institutions. Applicants' academic and/or extracurricular performance may not be good enough to get into them.
  - Target colleges/universities - applicants' academic and or/extracurricular performance meet admission requirements and applicants are more likely to secure admission.
  - Safety colleges/universities – we can refer to them as backup colleges/universities. Applicants' academic and/or extracurricular performance usually exceeds admission requirements.
- Check their email regularly.
  - The Office will often provide students with important information via email – reading material, meeting schedules with the Office, upcoming college/university fairs, and meetings with college/university representatives. Students are expected to be able to monitor their emails and respond in a timely manner.
- Prepare for standardized tests.
  - Students are expected to research admission requirements of those colleges/universities that they are applying to – for instance, their standardized test policies. If a college/university requires SAT/ACT scores, it is the student's responsibility to prepare for these standardized tests.

## **Transcripts**

Official transcripts (signed and stamped) can only be obtained through the Office. If transcripts cannot be delivered to a college/university through MaiaLearning (the platform used at the European School to submit documents to colleges/universities) or other channels at our disposal, it is the student's responsibility (or his/her parents'/guardians'/sponsors' responsibility) to cover all expenses related to shipping hard copies.

Requests must be made at least seven days before the student needs the transcripts. The Office closely works with the coordinators from all three programs: the Georgian Program, IB, and the American School of Advanced Studies. The coordinators prepare transcripts for those grades in which the student attended the European School (grades 9-12). If the student has transferred to the European School, then it is his/her responsibility to bring academic transcripts from the academic institution he/she attended prior to the European School.

## **Deadlines for Issuing Transcripts:**

### *Georgian Program:*

- 9-11 - September 10
- Graduation statements with current courses - September 30
- Mid-year grades - January 20
- Final transcripts - May 30

### *International Baccalaureate:*

- 9-11 → July 10
- Graduation statements with current courses - September 30
- Predicted grades - December 3
- Mid-year grades - January 23
- Final transcripts - July 10

### *American School of Advanced Studies*

- 9-11 - July 10
- Graduation statements with current courses - October 10
- Mid-year grades - January 20
- Final transcripts - June 30

As for special cases, when students need to apply earlier than usual, The Office can request transcripts individually from program coordinators. The final transcript is usually sent to the university the student finally commits to. It is important to maintain or improve the grades that were already sent as part of the application.

**The Office will be monitoring the students' academic performance and is authorized to notify universities the student has applied to if the student's academic performance changes considerably.**

## **Deadlines**

It is the student's responsibility to monitor college/university deadlines for submitting scores, transcripts, applications, and providing additional materials and documents. It is important that the students carefully check each application deadline on their college/university list. Apart from these, there are deadlines for portfolios, scholarships, financial aid, score reports, entrance test registrations, etc. Therefore, it is imperative that the students communicate with the Office to ensure that the deadlines are met.

The UCCO also has internal, case-by-case deadlines for issuing recommendations, finalizing the college/university list, submitting personal essays/motivation statements/supplemental questions and other documents for review. These deadlines are determined by The Office and serve in the best interests of the student in question.

## **Early Decision/Early Action Applications**

The decision to apply early must be made according to the student's readiness for such applications, the willingness to commit to their choice in case of Early Decision, and the strategy discussed with the Office. Students must inform the Office in September of the application year if they wish to apply early. The subsequent discussion will reveal whether such application is in the best interests of the student in question.

## **Letters of Recommendation**

It is standard practice for colleges/universities to require letters of recommendation. Most – if not all – universities require teacher recommendations and counselor recommendations.

The usual number of teacher recommendations needed is two. It is advised that students request teacher recommendation letters as they finish grade 11. They can still ask for recommendation letters in grade 12; however, the request should be made no later than October 20th. To request counselor recommendation letters, students will need to fill out a survey provided on MaiaLearning, via email, or have a brief interview with the Office.

If a student is applying to colleges/universities that accept letters of recommendation from third parties, it is the student's responsibility to make sure that the letter is delivered, through appropriate methods, to the college/university.

If a student needs hard copies of letters of recommendations, the student must inform the Office, which, upon such necessity, will facilitate the process or suggest alternative methods for submission.

Students must inform the teacher and the Office in written form by the deadline (October 20). When the agreement is reached and the teacher commits to writing the letter of recommendation, it is the teacher's responsibility to coordinate the efforts with the Office and submit the letter by the deadline set by the college/university.

It is advisable for the student to give all necessary information to teachers and the Office in the process; open communication between The Office and the student (surveys/emails/interviews/counseling sessions), the student's good academic performance and consistent completion of application tasks/milestones will all play a role in crafting effective letters of recommendation.



## **College/University Lists**

The Office helps students build college/university application lists based on their grades, extracurricular activities, achievements, the budget discussed with the family, and the concept of the “right fit;” therefore, it is imperative that the student, as well as the student’s parents/legal guardians/sponsors, provide accurate information regarding their plans, financial contribution, and their intentions in surveys or interviews to build their application plans.

## **MaiaLearning**

The European School uses MaiaLearning to manage the applications. Therefore, it is imperative that the students registered on MaiaLearning follow instructions and tasks assigned by the Office closely. This prevents the risk of missing deadlines, building flawed applications, and the ultimate failure in the admissions process.

## **Communication**

The Office will communicate important messages with the school community via email. It is imperative that the students and families provide email addresses to the European School and that the students use their school email for this communication. Online meetings may be recorded by the Office for further reference or training purposes.

## **Attending Classes**

The office is authorized to attend the classes of 11th-grade students. Attending classes allows the Office to get to know the students better, learn about their interests, character, needs, strengths, and weaknesses, and gather necessary material for recommendation letters.

## **Continuous Professional Development, international collaboration, and engagement**

The UCCO team is committed to continuous professional development, as well as international collaboration and engagement. To ensure the effectiveness of their professional development, UCCO members maintain IACAC memberships, attend annual IACAC, CIS, and THE conferences/events, host and visit universities from around the world and ensure that best global practice for university and career counseling is adopted and fine-tuned to ES context.