



SHA TIN
COLLEGE

STC SPOTLIGHT ON HIGHER EDUCATION

March 2026 Edition



CONTACT US



Phone Number:
(+852) 2699 1811



Email:
HigherEd@shatincollege.edu.hk

Introduction

We are pleased to share that our Higher Education 1:1 interviews with Year 12 students have now begun. These conversations are an important step in supporting students as they prepare their university applications. To help everyone navigate this process smoothly, we'd like to highlight some common pitfalls to avoid:

Common Mistakes in Higher Education Applications

Successfully managing the college application process is crucial, and avoiding simple errors can make a big difference. Here are some key reminders:

- **Don't leave it to the last minute.** Rushed applications often lead to missed deadlines and unnecessary stress.
- **Follow instructions carefully.** Each university has its own requirements—overlooking details can weaken your application.
- **Check your work.** Typos, grammar mistakes, or formatting issues may seem small but can leave a poor impression.
- **Seek feedback.** Ask HE Counsellors, teachers, tutors, or peers to review essays and materials—fresh eyes can catch what you might miss.
- **Plan ahead for recommendations.** Request letters early and give your referees plenty of time to write thoughtful endorsements.
- **Schedule tests in advance.** SAT, ACT, or other required exams should be booked well before deadlines to avoid last-minute panic.
- **Stay organised.** Keep track of all required documents and ensure they are submitted on time.

By being proactive, detail-oriented, and organised, students can approach the application process with confidence and maximise their chances of success.

We look forward to continuing these interviews and supporting each student on their journey toward higher education.

Degree Programmes

Many university degrees often blend high demand, personal interest, and career potential. Top choices among STC students include Computer Science, Engineering (Mechanical, Civil, Electrical, Chemical), Medicine, Law, Business & Management, Psychology, alongside strong Humanities/Arts like English Literature, History, and Economics, catering to both tech/STEM careers and critical thinking/creative roles.

Popular & Career-Focused Fields

- Computer Science & IT: Algorithms, software, data, AI – high global demand.
- Engineering: Mechanical, Civil, Electrical, Chemical, Aeronautical – practical problem-solving.
- Business & Management: Accounting, Finance, Marketing, Economics – essential for industry.
- Medicine & Health Sciences: Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Dentistry – vital, long-term careers.
- Law: Critical thinking, legal systems – strong career paths.

Growing & In-Demand Fields

- Data Science & AI: Analysing complex data, future-focused.
- Psychology: Understanding human behaviour, applicable in many sectors.
- Life Sciences: Biology, Biochemistry, Environmental Science – linked to health and the planet.

Humanities & Arts

- English & Literature: Communication, critical analysis.
- History & Classics: Understanding past societies and cultures.
- Philosophy: Logic, ethics, foundational thinking.
- Art & Design/Architecture: Creativity, built environment.

How to Choose

- Consider Your Interests: Passion drives success in challenging subjects.
- Look at Career Prospects: Research job growth and earning potential for graduates.
- Explore University Rankings: Check rankings by subject (QS, THE) to see top institutions.
- Think Broadly: Some subjects (like Economics or English) open many doors, while others (like Medicine) offer direct professional paths.

Focused Applications, Stronger Outcomes

Why We Set a Quota of 10 University Applications

At STC, we believe that applying to university should be a thoughtful, strategic process. That's why we have set a quota of **10 university applications worldwide** for each student. This approach ensures that every application is **focused, personalised, and of the highest quality**.



The Benefits of a Focused Approach

- **Quality over quantity:** Students dedicate time to crafting strong essays, personal statements, and portfolios.
- **Strategic targeting:** Applications are directed to institutions that closely align with academic interests and career goals.
- **Reduced stress:** Limiting applications helps students balance their workload and avoid rushed submissions.
- **Better preparation:** More time can be invested in interviews, CVs, personal statements, and supplementary materials.
- **Confidence in choices:** A curated list of universities helps students feel secure in their decisions.

How We Support Students

Our counselling team works closely with each student to:

- **Identify strengths** and match them with suitable universities.
- **Provide personalised guidance** on essays, interviews (if required), and requirements.
- **We strongly advise a balance** between reach, match, and safety schools.

This structured approach means every student has a realistic, well-supported pathway to success.

A Message To Parents

We understand that parents want the very best opportunities for their children. While a quota may feel limiting at first, it is not about restricting ambition—it is about **channelling ambition wisely**. By focusing on 10 strong applications, students maximise their chances of admission to universities that truly fit their academic and personal goals.

This strategy is designed to give our students the **best possible outcomes**: fewer distractions, stronger applications, and greater confidence as they take their next step into higher education.

Parent Tips: Supporting Your Child Through Applications

- **Encourage reflection:** Talk with your child about their academic interests and long-term goals.
- **Stay positive:** Remind them that fewer applications mean stronger, more personalised submissions.
- **Offer balance:** Help them manage time between applications, schoolwork, and rest.
- **Trust the process:** Rely on the expertise of our counselling team to guide decisions.
- **Celebrate milestones:** Acknowledge each completed application as a step toward success.

Co-op Programmes

Co-op programmes offer valuable real-world experience and career advantages, but they may extend degree timelines and come with competitive placement challenges.

Here's a breakdown of the key **advantages and disadvantages** of university co-op programmes to help you evaluate whether they're a good fit:

Advantages of Co-op Programmes

- **Real-world experience:** Students gain hands-on work experience in their field, applying classroom knowledge to practical settings.
- **Enhanced employability:** Graduates with co-op experience often have a competitive edge in the job market. Employers value candidates who've already worked in relevant roles.
- **Professional networking:** Co-op placements allow students to build industry connections that can lead to future job offers.
- **Financial benefits:** Most co-op positions are paid, helping students offset tuition costs and reduce reliance on loans.
- **Career clarity:** Exposure to different roles helps students refine their career goals and make informed decisions about their future.

Disadvantages of Co-op Programmes

- **Extended graduation timeline:** Co-op programmes often add an extra semester or year to a student's degree.
- **Competitive placements:** Securing a desirable co-op job can be challenging, especially in oversubscribed fields.
- **Academic disruption:** Alternating between work and study may interrupt academic momentum or delay course sequences.
- **Limited job variety:** In some disciplines, co-op options may be narrow or repetitive, offering limited exposure to diverse roles.
- **Geographic constraints:** Students may need to relocate temporarily for placements, which can be logistically and financially demanding.

Summary Table

Factor	Advantage	Disadvantage
Experience	Real-world skills and resume-building	May interrupt academic flow
Career prospects	Better job readiness and networking	Placement competition can be intense
Financial impact	Paid work reduces financial burden	Relocation or living costs may increase
Time to graduate	Valuable learning over time	Often adds extra semester or year
Career clarity	Helps refine goals through exposure	Limited job diversity in some fields

If you're considering a co-op programme, it's important to weigh these trade-offs based on your academic goals, career aspirations, and personal circumstances. Would you like help comparing specific universities that offer co-op programmes or exploring how co-op differs from internships?

Top Universities with Strong Co-op Programmes

These institutions are known for robust co-op offerings, employer partnerships, and global reach:

University	Location	Co-op Highlights
Northeastern University	Boston, USA	Over 3,000 employer partners in 131 countries; global placements; multiple co-op cycles CollegeVine
Drexel University	Philadelphia, USA	One of the oldest co-op programmes; 1,700+ employers; domestic and international options CollegeVine
University of Cincinnati	Ohio, USA	Invented co-op model; alternating semesters of paid work and study True Scoop News
Simon Fraser University	British Columbia, Canada	Comprehensive co-op across disciplines; strong industry ties True Scoop News
University of Victoria	British Columbia, Canada	Paid work terms integrated with academic studies; strong employer network True Scoop News
Rochester Institute of Technology	New York, USA	Hands-on experience across disciplines; career-focused co-op structure True Scoop News

Co-op vs. Internship: Key Differences

Aspect	Co-op Programme	Internship
Duration	Long-term (often 3–12 months); may alternate with academic terms collegecoops.com	Short-term (typically 8–12 weeks); often during summer usnews.com
Academic Integration	Part of the curriculum; may be required for graduation collegecoops.com	Optional or elective; less formal integration usnews.com
Compensation	Usually paid; structured employment collegecoops.com	May be paid or unpaid; varies by employer usnews.com
Commitment	Full-time work during co-op terms; may delay graduation uc.edu	Part-time or short-term; minimal impact on graduation timeline usnews.com
Career Impact	Stronger employer relationships; deeper experience collegecoops.com	Good exposure; less immersive usnews.com

Choosing Between Co-op and Internship

- **Choose co-op** if you want immersive, paid work experience that’s deeply tied to your academic path and career goals.
- **Choose an internship** if you prefer flexibility, shorter commitments, or want to explore multiple industries before committing.

Spotlight On The University of Manchester

A World-Class Institution

Founded in 1824, the **University of Manchester** is part of the prestigious Russell Group of UK universities. It has a proud history of innovation and discovery, with **26 Nobel Prize winners** among its staff and alumni. The university is recognised globally for its excellence in teaching, research, and social responsibility, making it a top choice for ambitious students.

The University of Manchester

Why Manchester Stands Out

- **Academic excellence:** Ranked among the world's top universities, offering a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.
- **Research impact:** Known for pioneering work across disciplines, from science and engineering to humanities and social sciences.
- **Vibrant city life:** Located in Manchester, a city famous for its role in the Industrial Revolution, as well as its thriving arts, music, and sports culture.
- **Global opportunities:** Strong international partnerships and exchange programmes give students worldwide exposure.
- **Student support:** Comprehensive services for career development, wellbeing, and academic success.

Student Experience

Life at Manchester is about more than academics. Students enjoy access to:

- **Modern campus facilities** including libraries, labs, and collaborative spaces.
- **Cultural opportunities** in a city known for its museums, theaters, and music venues.
- **Community engagement** through volunteering and social responsibility initiatives.
- **Diverse student societies** that cater to interests ranging from sports to entrepreneurship.

[The University of Manchester](#)

Practical Tips for Parents & Students

Supporting Your Child at Manchester:

- **Accommodation:** Explore university halls or private housing early to secure the best options.
- **Moving abroad:** Plan ahead for visas, travel, and settling-in support.
- **Stay connected:** Regular check-ins help students feel supported while adjusting to independence.
- **Explore the city:** Encourage students to enjoy Manchester's music, sports, and cultural scene.
- **Career focus:** Make use of the university's career services and employer connections.



Applications To Mainland China

Mainland China offers limited but some pathways for Hong Kong non-DSE students, ranging from direct IB entry to competitive nomination schemes. Below are the primary routes available.

Direct IB Entry (Year-Two Admission)

Two main Sino-foreign cooperative universities accept direct IB applications for year-two entry:

- University of Nottingham Ningbo China – Offers year-two entry based on IB performance.
[Entry requirements](#)
- Xi'an Jiaotong–Liverpool University (XJTLU) – Accepts IB students for direct year-two entry.
[Entry requirements](#)

Note: These institutions provide international-standard education within mainland China, often with English as the primary medium of instruction.

Dual Degree Programmes (HK–Mainland Partnerships)

Several Hong Kong universities offer collaborative programmes allowing you to spend time at both a Hong Kong institution and a mainland partner university, graduating with degrees from both:

- HKU – University Collaborative Programmes: [Details](#)
- CUHK – Dual Degree Programmes: [Details](#)
- PolyU – Dual Degree Programmes: [Details](#)

Benefit: These programmes offer structured support for the transition to mainland academic life while maintaining your HK university base.

Tsinghua University & Peking University: Nomination Scheme

These two institutions rank among China's most selective universities and require school nomination for HK applicants.

- **Timeline:** Nominations typically open in late December. Shortlisted candidates sit written tests and interviews in April, with decisions announced shortly after.
- **School Nomination:** The HE Department will announce the nomination scheme and provide guidance to Year 13 students for next steps.
- **Application Slots:** Students who wish to be nominated for Tsinghua or Peking must allocate one of the 10 application slots to the university. Given the highly selective nature of these institutions, careful consideration should be given before confirming your list.
- **First Choice Commitment:** Tsinghua and Peking must be listed as your **first choice**. Each year, the universities allocate our school a limited number of nomination quotas based on previous years' performance and enrollment.

- **Commitment Expectations:** Once nominated and subsequently offered a place, students are expected to honour this commitment. Withdrawing after accepting an offer may affect future nomination quotas for subsequent cohorts and is therefore strongly discouraged. Similarly, withdrawing from the application process after receiving school nomination may jeopardise future opportunities.

Please consult the HE team regarding specific processes and requirements, as policies may vary each year.

Joint Entrance Exam (JEE) Route

If you hold a Hong Kong ID Card (permanent or non-permanent) plus a Mainland Travel Permit for Hong Kong and Macau Residents (Home Return Permit) or a Residence Permit for Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan Residents, you will likely need to sit the JEE for most mainland universities outside the nomination schemes above.

- **Registration: Administered by the HKEAA.** [JEE Information](#)
- **Critical Timing & Language Considerations:** The JEE is usually held in May and may interfere with your IB exam preparation period. Furthermore, the examination is conducted entirely in Chinese (Mandarin) and tests specific subject knowledge that may not align with your IB course selections. Students considering this route must thoroughly research subject requirements and carefully assess whether they can manage the dual demands of JEE preparation alongside their final IB examinations.

Important Clarification: International Student Status

HK students are generally not considered international applicants when applying to mainland Chinese universities, even when holding foreign passports. Universities typically classify applicants based on household registration (hukou) and permit status rather than passport nationality. For reference on how this policy affects Chinese heritage applicants, see [NYU Shanghai's explanation](#).

Independent Recruitment Schemes

Some universities maintain independent admissions policies outside standard nomination or JEE routes. For example, **Shenzhen University** operates its own [recruitment scheme](#) for HK students.

If you have a specific target institution in mind, please discuss this with the HE counsellor to explore any special pathways available.

Practical Advice for Applicants

- **Language Preparation:** While some programmes offer English-medium instruction, daily life and many academic resources require Mandarin proficiency. Consider how it will influence both your academic and social experience.
- **Academic Competition:** Even with strong IB scores, admission to Tsinghua and Peking remains highly competitive. Ensure you have realistic backup options within your application portfolio.

- **Cultural Adjustment:** Living in Beijing, Shanghai, or other mainland cities involves adapting to different academic expectations, administrative systems, and cultural norms. Prepare for a Mandarin-dominant environment outside the classroom.
- **Deadline Management:** Mainland application timelines can differ from UK/US/HK systems. Mark the important dates on your calendar.
- **Early Consultation:** Meet with your HE counsellor to discuss this if you are taking mainland applications into consideration.

Considering A Sandwich Degree?

As you begin exploring higher education options, one pathway worth serious consideration is the **sandwich degree**. Unlike a standard three-year degree, a sandwich programme integrates a year of work placement or study abroad between academic years. This unique structure offers students a powerful blend of academic learning and real-world experience.

Key Benefits of a Sandwich Degree

- **Enhanced employability:** Graduates often stand out to employers because they bring not only academic knowledge but also practical experience.
- **Professional networking:** Students build valuable industry contacts during their placement year, opening doors to future opportunities.
- **Confidence and independence:** Navigating a workplace or living abroad fosters maturity, adaptability, and self-reliance.
- **Financial advantage:** Many placements are paid, helping students offset tuition costs and gain financial independence.
- **Academic enrichment:** Returning to final-year studies after a placement often leads to stronger performance, as students can connect theory with practice.
- **Global perspective:** For those who choose an international placement, exposure to different cultures and work environments broadens horizons.

Sandwich Degree vs. Traditional Degree

Pathway	Duration	Experience	Graduate Advantage
Traditional 3-Year Degree	3 years	Academic study only	Knowledge-based
Sandwich Degree	4 years	1 year placement + study	Knowledge + practical skills

Why It Matters for Students

Choosing a sandwich degree means graduating not just with a diploma, but with a résumé already filled with relevant experience. Employers increasingly value graduates who can demonstrate adaptability, teamwork, and problem-solving skills gained outside the classroom.

Final Thought

Parents, supporting your child in considering a sandwich degree could give them a head start in today's competitive job market. Students, think of it as an investment in your future—one that blends learning with living.

Future Careers: Preparing Students For Jobs That Don't Yet Exist

Why This Matters

The world of work is changing faster than ever. Many of the jobs that today's Year 13 students will hold in the future don't even exist yet. Universities are responding by equipping students with adaptable skills, preparing them for industries that are still emerging.

How Universities Are Responding

1. Building Future-Proof Skills

- **Critical thinking and problem-solving:** Training students to approach complex challenges creatively.
- **Digital literacy and AI fluency:** Ensuring graduates can work alongside new technologies.
- **Interpersonal and cross-cultural skills:** Preparing students for globalised workplaces.

2. Flexible Learning Models

- **Microcredentials and short courses:** Allowing students to upskill quickly as industries evolve.
- **Interdisciplinary degrees:** Combining fields like computer science + ethics, or engineering + sustainability.
- **Experiential learning:** Internships, project-based modules, and industry partnerships simulate real-world challenges.

3. Lifelong Learning

Universities are positioning themselves as hubs of continuous learning, offering alumni access to ongoing training and professional development. This helps graduates remain competitive as industries shift.

Examples of Emerging Fields

Future Career Area	University Preparation Strategy
AI Ethics & Governance	Courses blending philosophy, law, and computer science
Renewable Energy Engineering	Labs, sustainability-focused degrees, and industry partnerships
Data Science & Analytics	Cross-disciplinary training in math, computing, and business
Health Tech & Biomedicine	Integration of engineering, biology, and clinical practice
Cybersecurity & Digital Trust	Specialised programmes + real-world simulations

Risks & Considerations

- **Curriculum lag:** Universities may struggle to update programmes quickly enough to keep pace with industry changes.
- **Equity gap:** Students from less-resourced backgrounds may miss out on cutting-edge opportunities.
- **Over-specialisation risk:** Focusing too narrowly on “hot” fields may leave graduates vulnerable if trends shift.

Key Takeaway for Parents and Students

Universities are not just teaching for today’s jobs, but for tomorrow’s unknowns. Students should value adaptability, curiosity, and resilience as much as grades. Future careers may not exist yet—but the skills to succeed in them are now being addressed at many, if not all universities.

Closing Message

Parents and students, the journey to higher education is both exciting and challenging. With focused applications, thoughtful choices, and strong support, STC students are well-prepared to succeed in a rapidly changing world.

Our counselling team is here to guide you every step of the way.

Meet The Team

Mr. David Stott - Head of Careers & Higher Education

D1, D2

Email: dzs@shatincollege.edu.hk

Ms. Gigi Lam - Higher Education Counsellor

G1, G2, P1

Email: gigi.lam@shatincollege.edu.hk

Ms. Sherley Zhao - Higher Education Counsellor

P2, X1, X2

Email: sherley.zhao@shatincollege.edu.hk

Mr. Yannick Yu - Careers Coordinator

Email: cdy@shatincollege.edu.hk

Ms. Jacqueline Kwan - Higher Education Guidance & Alumni Administrator

Email: jacqueline.kwan@shatincollege.edu.hk

For general enquires please reach out to HigherEd@shatincollege.edu.hk .



**We challenge our students to make
meaningful contributions to the world.**

