

Post-Secondary Admissions Project

The **Ontario Federation of Teaching Parents (OFTP)** initiated the **Post-Secondary Admissions Project** in January of 2001 in order to study the situation regarding access of home educated students to colleges and universities and to address any admissions issues that arise. We also aim to act as a bridge between the homeschooling community and admissions personnel. We've been helping college and university officials understand the background of the homeschool movement and the applications they will inevitably receive as the movement continues to grow, as well as assisting families to effectively design and document their chosen educational approach during the high school years based on requirements determined by post secondary institutions.

While some Ontario universities have accepted homeschoolers over the years, there had been more and more stories surfacing about the inadequacies of the framework within which homeschoolers and admissions offices were operating. For several years the OFTP had discussions with Ministry representatives, admissions personnel from various post secondary institutions, home educating families that had been through the admissions process, and families who were structuring an educational path for the high school years. We have compiled enough information to provide a broad picture of the issues related to post secondary admissions and have developed some ideas about how the homeschooling community and admissions officers can work together.

What have we accomplished?

2001

- We requested and were granted an [amendment to the "Ontario Operating Funds Distribution Manual"](#) which now provides funding to universities for students who apply for admission but do not have an OSSD.
- We produced a 49 page report called "[Developing Homeschool Admission Policies](#)". In June 2001 we presented this to Karel Swift, registrar of the University of Toronto, and Keith Alnwick, registrar of Ryerson Polytechnic University, who were acting as representatives of the Ontario Council of University Admissions.
- This report was also distributed to admissions personnel from various universities during University Fair in Toronto in September 2001. As a result, we were invited to send a speaker to the annual conference of the Ontario Universities Registrars Association (OURA) in February 2002.
- We worked with Leo Groarke of Wilfrid Laurier University, Brantford Campus, on their new proposed homeschool admissions policy.
- We met with the registrar and manager of Admissions at George Brown College in Toronto and provided them with information about homeschooling. They expressed a willingness to work with OFTP in lobbying the government to change some policies that affect eligibility of homeschool attendance at colleges.

- A representative of our project met with St. Clair College. As a result, the college instituted an entry policy for homeschoolers.

2002

- In February 2002 a representative made a presentation at the annual conference of the (OURA) Ontario University Registrars' Association.
- We contacted and sent a report to all of the colleges in Ontario, hoping to increase awareness of homeschool admissions issues with these schools.
- We contacted financial aid offices across Ontario, with the goals of educating personnel about homeschool admissions and learning about what issues need to be addressed.
- We were invited to provide feedback to Ottawa University's draft proposal for a new homeschool admission policy, which they were preparing for the fall of 2002.

We have identified some important issues that need to be addressed:

- the age restriction for college courses which limits the ability for homeschoolers to accumulate a few college level grades for their "transcript"
- access to Advanced Placement tests (AP tests)
- scholarships and financial aid -- we contacted various organizations to determine eligibility for homeschoolers and provide information
- the age restrictions for the [Independent Learning Centre](#) (ILC) and availability of courses that can be accessed online.

Our ongoing research:

Research on Homeschoolers' Attempts to Gain Entrance To College/University

If you have any homeschooled children who have applied (successfully or not) to enter college or university, or know of any other homeschooling families who have experience in this area, please contact us or encourage others to do so. You may fill out our [questionnaire](#).

The questionnaire is completely confidential. It has helped us identify issues that homeschoolers are facing, colleges/universities that are homeschool friendly (or not), and schools that are granting scholarships to homeschoolers (or not). Please share your stories. The whole community is richer for it.

Higher Education for Homelearners

This is a forum created to encourage dialogue about the transition of Canadian homeschooled students into post-secondary education. [We invite home educating families and anyone with an interest in broadening our understanding of the admissions process in Canada to join and share their knowledge and experience.](#) This group is sponsored by the **Ontario Federation of Teaching Parents** and is part of our ongoing investigation into this issue.

Contact

OFTP Post-Secondary Admissions Project contact: Dr. Carlo Ricci at
liaison1@ontariohomeschool.org

Questionnaire: Attempts to Gain Entrance to College/University

This questionnaire is part of the OFTP's Post-Secondary Admissions Project. The information from these questionnaires will be compiled to assist other home educated students in planning for further education. Both students who have been successful in gaining entrance to college or university, as well as those who haven't, are encouraged to reply. Please take a few minutes to review the entire questionnaire before starting. This will allow you to get a feel for the flow of our questions. The choices are either narrative or circle the best response. Please feel free to elaborate and use more space, wherever you feel necessary.

Name of student: _____

Person completing questionnaire: _____

Relationship to student: _____

May we contact you if further information/clarification is needed? Yes No

How? _____

May we use your name/student's name in our results? Yes No

1. How long was student home schooled?

2. What method of home education did you follow?

a. packaged curriculum (e.g. Abeka) -- company name(s):

b. eclectic (combination of student led & parent directed)

c. unschooling

3. What preparation was made during the highschool years for the application process to university? (e.g. portfolios, tests, ILC courses, record keeping, narratives, interview preparation) and for how many years?

4. Did the student take correspondence OAC or other courses? Yes No

If yes, which ones? Offered by whom? What response did these receive from universities?

5. Did the student take virtual (online) courses? Yes No

If yes, which ones? Offered by whom? What response did these receive from universities?

6. To which institutions did student apply? Why?

7. List the requirements of the university, used to evaluate student's application. (e.g. portfolio, records, interview, specific tests etc.). If they would not consider the application, or refused it, what were the grounds/reasons? (please use additional space as needed).

8. Outline any concerns, obstacles encountered.

9. Were there any issues that made the process difficult/easy that you feel should be addressed?

10. Scholarships: outline any opportunities presented by the institutions, applications therefor and results thereof.

11. Is there anything you wish you had done differently to prepare for the application process?
Yes No

If yes, please explain.

12. Any advice for homeschoolers who are starting to prepare for college or university? Or who aren't sure, but who would like to keep the door open for further studies?

Thank you for taking time to help another homeschooler!!

2001 – Developing Homeschool Admission Policies

Historical Record - Much of the discussion part of this brief is still valid today. However, please be aware that the document also includes information that may be outdated. In particular, the sample admissions policies are still included for the purpose of illustration and historical record, but should not be relied upon as current. For the current policies of various post-secondary institutions, please see the section on [University](#) for homeschoolers.

A brief prepared by the Ontario Federation of Teaching Parents

Revised July 14, 2001

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The University Project - A brief overview

The **Ontario Federation of Teaching Parents** (OFTP) initiated the University Project in January of this year [2001] in order to study the present situation with regard to access of home educated students to colleges and universities and address any admissions issues that arise. Our goal is to act as a bridge between the homeschooling community and admissions personnel, helping university officials understand the background behind the homeschool movement and the applications they will inevitably receive as well as assisting families to effectively design and document their chosen educational approach during the highschool years.

We have written to Diane Cunningham, the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities requesting that the funding issue relating to homeschool applicants be addressed. We have recently learned that the MTCU has amended the The Ontario Operating Funds Distribution Manual to address our concerns by rewording the eligibility criteria to include an equivalency to an OSSD. We assume "equivalency" is to be determined by the universities themselves. With this revision, universities can now move forward with their development of admissions policies for home educated students knowing admittance of these students to their institutions will no longer be a contentious funding issue.

Other issues we will address at a later date are: eligibility for scholarships and bursaries, the discriminatory way in which the Apprenticeship Certification Act is interpreted by the government, and the development of a package which will outline effective strategies for homeschooled families to design and document their educational approach for post secondary institutions.

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Some Background on Homeschooling Approaches

Although statistical research on homeschoolers is problematic because there are no government statistics that include the majority of homeschooling families who never report to school. OFTP has estimated that there are approximately 20,000 students homeschooling in Ontario and the numbers are growing every year.

In the United States, former Department of Education researcher Patricia M. Lines, writing in *The Public Interest*, estimates that now anywhere from 1.5 to 2 million children are being home schooled, considerably more than the 400,000 students enrolled in charter schools across the country. "The rise of home schooling," Lines judges, "is one of the most significant social trends of the past half century." Now, the National Home Education Research Institute (NHERI) quotes a similar number - close to 3 percent of the school- age population, 1/4th of the private school population. They report that more than 200,000 students who participated in home schooling are enrolled in college, a number that will likely

grow to more than 1 million in the next decade, the center predicts. The U.S. Department of Education estimates that homeschooling numbers are growing 15% per year.

As early as December 1991, U.S. News & World Report recognized that an "estimated 50 percent of home-schooled students attend college, about the same rate as their public-school counterparts." According to a nationwide study published by Dr. Brian Ray in 1997, homeschool graduates continue to pursue either post-secondary education or employment at similar rates to public school graduates.

There is a wide range of educational approaches that homeschoolers can choose from which reflects learning styles and interests, community resources that are available, and parenting philosophies.

Some families adopt a highly structured approach similar to conventional schools consuming hundreds of dollars worth of commercial curriculum materials per year complete with a standardized test at the end of each school year and a summer vacation. Other families adopt an unstructured approach, are opposed to conventional school practice, and let the learning flow from daily experience and the child's own interests... sometimes referred to as "unschooling". They contend that learning happens naturally, every day, all day. Some of these families do not believe in testing at all. Most families fall somewhere along a continuum between these two extremes and adjust their approaches over time; as their children get older, learning styles emerge and interests start to develop.

Homeschoolers like to say that the world is their classroom. Or, as John Lyon, writing for the Rockford Institute, has observed,

"Schooling, rather obviously, is what goes on in schools; education takes place wherever and whenever the nature with which we are born is nurtured so as to draw out of those capacities which conduce to true humanity. The home, the church, the neighborhood, the peer group, the media, the shopping mall... are all educational institutions. "

Modern learning theories aside, homeschoolers believe that the student who receives his instruction simultaneously from the home and the community at large will be a more culturally sophisticated child than the one the bulk of whose learning experiences is confined to a school.

Here are some examples of learning opportunities that homeschooled students have reported:

Glenna Records, a Sonoma County mom who teaches part-time in the public schools as well as homeschools two teenage daughters, pointed out that "almost any subject pursued in depth will take you across the curriculum."

Records' younger daughter, Rosie, 14, developed an interest in the elephant seals at Point Reyes and became a volunteer at the park. She wrote a pamphlet on the animals that is sold at the visitor center, and the project brought a range of disciplines into play. Andre Wenn took charge of building a small greenhouse for the family's use when he was just 11.

In apprenticing at a wilderness adventure program in the Sierra foothills and helping to build a ropes course there, Katie Stufflebeam had an opportunity to learn and apply a wide range of skills. "They had a landscaper teach us how to build trails, and we had a lot of writing assignments to do," she said. "Working the ropes course, there's always tons of

math and geometry and trigonometry to be used, to make sure that the cables are strong enough from one tree to the next, and how much slack there has to be in it for a 300-pound person to walk on it and not have the trees break."

Regardless of what motivates parents to choose home-based education for their children or the pedagogy they follow, the homeschooling population is now a microcosm of our society and it is growing. They include families of different races, socioeconomic backgrounds, and religions.

The challenge for admissions officers will be in developing admission policies and assessment procedures that are flexible enough to recognize the educational richness and relevance of the different approaches homeschoolers choose and to communicate clear guidelines for how students should present their educational background.

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Homeschool Successes

In the last 10 years, much research has documented the strengths of home educated students in both Canada and the United States, both academically and socially. The general public is more informed and supportive of the parental right to choose to home educate their children due in part to the increasingly varied constituencies who have joined the movement. Instead of blank stares or criticism from people who hear a parent or child proclaim they homeschool, parents are now hearing comments such as "I wish I had done that". This perception is boosted by the national recognition that homeschoolers receive when the media reports how well they do in contests and competitions, standardized tests, and research studying the socialization and academic progress of home educated students. Also contributing are the many books that have been published such as *Homeschooling for Excellence*, by the Colfax family in California who sent three sons to Harvard and wrote a book about their years learning together, *Ready, Set, College: The Homeschoolers Guide to College* by Wendy Whaley, *Homeschoolers' College Admissions Handbook* by Cafi Cohen, and *The Homeschooler's Guide to Portfolios and Transcripts* by Loretta Heuer.

These are some reports of homeschool successes the media has reported in the last few years.

Competitions

In the United States last year, home-schoolers startled the educational establishment when they swept the top three places in the prestigious Scripps Howard National Spelling Bee. Just a week earlier, home-schoolers took four of the top 10 spots at the national geography bee including the second place prize, a \$15,000 scholarship.

This year, homeschoolers will again make up more than 10 percent of the national spelling bee's participants and an even higher proportion at the National Geographic Bee, sponsored by the National Geographic Society.

The National Merit Scholarship Corp. selected more than 70 home-schooled high school seniors as semifinalists in its 1998 competition, 137 in 1999 and 150 in 2000.

Two Arkansas students, Molly Peters-Stanley, 18, of Conway and Rachel Bunch, 14, of North Little Rock, were honored in the nation's capital for outstanding volunteer service to their communities during the presentation of The 2001 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards.

This year, students at a Patrick Henry College (a college designed specifically for homeschoolers) scored big at the National Educational Debate Association tournament, bringing home eight trophies and a college award for an outstanding first year in intercollegiate debate. Only one other college had as many participants in the semifinal rounds as PHC. The National Educational Debate Association gave the college the special-recognition award for the school's outstanding new debate program.

The National Kraft/BJ's Wholesale essay contest has had a homeschooler win the grand prize.

A Pennsylvania homeschooled senior, now in his first year at Harvard, earned a spot on the All-USA High School Academic First Team sponsored by USA Today. He was selected from among 7,213 nominees as one of the top 20 high school academics in the country based on his outstanding scholarship, intellectual achievement and leadership.

Standardized tests

Repeatedly, across North America, the home educated score as well as or better, on average, than those in conventional schools.

Researcher Patricia Lines notes that "virtually all the available data show that the group of homeschooled children who are tested is above average. The pattern for children for whom data are available resembles that of children in private schools."

Brian D. Ray, president of the National Home Education Research Institute conducted Canada's largest study of its kind and revealed that regardless of income, race, sex, or parents' level of education, homeschooled children scored, on average, at the 80th percentile in reading, the 76th in language, and the 79th in math. Students whose parents were certified teachers did no better than the other students.

Data from the Washington Homeschool Research Project, which has analyzed the SAT scores of homeschooled children in Washington State since 1985, demonstrated that their scores were above average.

For the third year in a row, home-educated students have scored higher on the ACT college-entrance exam than their fellow students who are traditionally educated. While the average ACT assessment score was 21 nationally, home-educated students scored an average of 22.8. In previous years, they scored 22.8 and 22.7.

In April of this year, Time magazine reported that homeschoolers scored an average of 1,100 on the SAT - a full 81 points above the national average. Last year, homeschoolers scored an average 1,083 - amounting to 67 points above the national average of 1,016.

Similarly, on the 10 SAT2 achievement tests most frequently taken by homeschoolers, they surpassed the national average on nine - including writing, physics and French.

Students schooled at home score higher on standardized tests than their public and private school peers in every subject and at every grade level, according to a study based on

20,760 homeschooled students from 50 states that is being billed as the largest study of its kind.

The study's author is Lawrence M. Rudner, a researcher who also serves as the director of the federally funded Educational Resources Information Center Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation at the University of Maryland College Park.

Among the study's findings:

- Students home-schooled their entire academic careers tested higher than students who first attended other school programs.
- Nearly 20 percent of mothers who home school are certified teachers.
- There was no significant difference in test scores between children taught by parents without a teaching certificate and those whose parents did hold a certificate.

"The implications are there regardless of where the child's education happens," said Bruce S. Cooper, a professor of educational administration at Fordham University in New York City, who tracks private schools. "The message is: Small is better. Strong parent and community involvement is key. We've known that for a long time."

Public school, conventional Christian school, and home school graduates at a large, Christian liberal arts university were examined and compared for their college academic preparedness and college academic achievement. Dr. Rhonda Galloway found that the home educated performed as well or better than the others on these measures.

In a large study, 16,311 students from across the U.S. were tested with the nationally normed Iowa Test of Basic Skills. The nationwide average for the home schooled on the Basic Battery (i.e., reading, language, and math) was the 77th percentile. They were at the 79th percentile in reading, the 73rd in language, and the 73rd in math. (The national average by definition is the 50th percentile.)

Dr. Steven Duvall compared the academic engaged time (AET) and basic skill development of learning disabled students who were home educated to those in public school special education programs. Higher rates of AET and greater academic gains were made by the home educated. "... parents, even without special education training, provided powerful instructional environments at home..."

A nationwide study (Ray, 1990), using a random sample of 1,516 families from one organization's membership, found home educated students to be scoring, on average, at or above the 80th percentile in all areas on standardized achievement tests.

Several individual states have conducted studies with similar results:

Dr. Howard Richman and his colleagues have found that the home educated in Pennsylvania score, on average, at the 86th percentile in reading and the 73rd percentile in math.

Wartes (1989) found that home school students in Washington consistently score at the 66th percentile on the Stanford Achievement Test, with their strongest scores in science, listening, vocabulary, and word reading.

Home education students in Montana scored at the 72nd percentile on standardized achievement tests (Ray, 1990).

The State of Tennessee (1988) reported that the home educated in that state averaged about the 83rd percentile in reading and about the 77th percentile in math on standardized achievement tests.

The state of Oregon (1988) found that 73% of the homeschool students who were tested scored above average.

The research findings across North America are consistent and reveal that the home educated do better, on average, than conventional school students on achievement tests.

Socialization

Most home-schooled kids take advantage of active networks of associations. Here in Ontario we have strong support networks providing various educational opportunities ranging from field trips, athletic pursuits (ranging from fencing to soccer), cultural enrichment (such as African drumming and theatre groups), and academic study groups focussing on literature, math, science and computers. One of the challenges for these families is in picking and choosing among the interesting opportunities available and avoiding overprogramming and burnout.

Michael P. Farris (Home School Legal Defense Association) wrote in his article "Solid Evidence to Support Home Schooling," in the Wall Street Journal, March 5, 1997: "As to the questions of socialization, home school children are involved in an average of 5.2 outside activities per week. Ninety-eight percent are involved in two or more outside functions on a weekly basis."

While most people accept that home educated students can excel academically, concerns are still expressed by teachers, administrators, and legislators about socialization. The research in this area suggests that this suspicion is unfounded.

Dr. Gary Knowles (presently with the Ontario Institute For Studies in Education), while at the University of Michigan, studied the outcomes for adults who were home educated. None were unemployed and none were on welfare, 94% said home education prepared them to be independent persons, 79% said it helped them interact with individuals from different levels of society, and they strongly supported the home education method. "I have found no evidence that these adults were even moderately disadvantaged."

In 1992, Larry Shyers of the University of Florida wrote a doctoral dissertation in which he challenged the notion that youngsters at home "lag" in social development. In his study, eight- to 10-year- old children were videotaped at play. Their behavior was observed by trained counselors who did not know which ones went to regular schools and which were homeschooled. The study found no big difference between the two groups in self-concept or assertiveness, which was measured by social development tests. However, the videotapes showed that youngsters who were taught at home by their parents had significantly fewer problem behaviours than did the school educated. This is probably because the primary models of behaviour for the home educated are their parents.

Bliss (1989) contends that it is in the formal educational system's setting that children first experience negative socialization, conformity, and peer pressure. According to her, "This is a setting of large groups, segmented by age, with a variation of authority figures . . . the individual, with his/her developmental needs, becomes overpowered by the expectations and demand of others-equal in age and equally developmentally needy."

In 1998, a group of homeschoolers at Kennesaw State University in Georgia formed what may be the first and only homeschool student union on an American campus today. The group's goals are "to facilitate interaction between students who share this unique educational background; to assist homeschoolers in their enrolling and adjusting to this next level of education and to encourage academic excellence; and to actively encourage other graduating homeschoolers to consider pursuing their college education at Kennesaw State University." These are not actions reflected by a socially inept segment of the population.

In a study during the fall of 1994, Oral Roberts University Dean of Enrollment Management Mike Mitchell reported that 88% of ORU home schooled students were involved in one or more outreach ministries. Many served as chaplains in the dorms and virtually all embraced the ORU honor code as an already adopted way of life. In addition, over 90% of ORU homeschoolers participated in intramural sports and nearly 80% in various campus clubs and organizations. Homeschoolers were active in all areas of college life, debunking the myth that homeschoolers are largely unsocialized.

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A Word From Admission Officers

"Homeschoolers bring certain skills-motivation, curiosity, the capacity to be responsible for their education-that high schools don't induce very well," Jon Reider, Stanford's senior associate director of admissions recently told the Wall Street Journal. Note: Last year, Stanford University in Palo Alto, Calif., accepted 27 percent of homeschooled applicants - nearly double its overall acceptance rate.

The consensus among admissions officers across the country, a 1997 study reports, is that home-schooled students are academically, emotionally, and socially prepared to excel in college.

Dr. Michael Donahue, Director of Admissions for Indiana University - Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), has spent the last several years researching home-schooled students. There are dozens of students on campus who have earned their high school diploma at home. "The home school group has about a 3.0 GPA their freshman year," Donahue said. "In the entire freshman class, the GPA is between a 2.3 and a 2.4. They are well prepared. They're self starters. Faculty, in general, enjoy having them in class because they know how to do things independently."

Formerly home schooled students enrolled at Boston University in the past four years have a 3.3 grade-point average (out of a possible 4.0) giving a good indicator of their overall success. Similarly, at Georgia's Kennesaw State University, home schooled students had higher-than-average GPAs as freshman.

"...a general consensus has emerged among colleges that have had significant numbers of home schooled applicants. It is this: these students tend to be above average in their academic preparation, and we should not impose different (or additional) standards than we require for other applicants."

Dan Crabtree, Director of College & Career Guidance, Wheaton Academy (IL)

A Time-magazine article "From Home to Harvard" April 9, 2001 states:

This year Stanford University accepted 26% of the 35 homeschoolers who applied--nearly double its overall acceptance rate. Twenty-three of this fall's 572 freshmen at Wheaton College in Illinois were homeschooled, and their SAT scores average 58 points higher than those of the overall class. "Often we're impressed by what someone has done under unusual circumstances," says Marlyn McGrath Lewis, director of admissions at Harvard University. "And homeschooling fits the bill."

The following appeared in a journal article in April, 2001:

"We welcome home school students," said University of Michigan-Flint Admissions Director Andrew Flagel. They score high on college admissions tests and "tend to be some of our best applicants." Easiest to evaluate are applicants like Marzonie, who received a high school diploma from an accredited home school program, but UM-Flint will accept home school students without a high school degree or equivalent, based on ACT scores or essays, Flagel said.

Since 1995, when Baker College first set an open-door policy for home-schooled students, their enrolment numbers have climbed to 1-2 percent, said Veronica Bordine, dean of general education and a home school parent of two children, now in college. Early on, some Baker instructors were leery about taking on home-schoolers, Bordine said, but strong academic performances won them over. "They come to college much more focussed," she said. "They seem to have a greater excitement about learning. They're not as peer- or grade-driven (as their public school counterparts). They bring a spark to classes."

This year's 692-member freshman class at Kettering University has 12 home-schoolers, and "we're trying to recruit more," said Bob Nichols, vice president of enrollment management. For the first time this year, Kettering recruiters will attend home school conferences in Grand Rapids and Lansing with the goal of selling home-schoolers on the university, Nichols said. "We're very impressed with the caliber of our home school students. They're student leaders and they're smart."

Many colleges now routinely accept home-schooled students, who typically present "portfolios" of their work instead of transcripts. Each year Harvard University takes up to 10 applicants who have had some home schooling. "In general, those kids do just fine," says David Illingworth, senior admissions officer. He adds that the number of applications and inquiries from homeschoolers is "definitely increasing."

"Homeschoolers have to work harder thereby increasing student productivity," Jeff Lantis said of the 75-90 homeschoolers at Hillsdale College (MI). "Homeschoolers are consistently among our top students, in fact homeschoolers have won our distinct Honors Program the last three years in a row. We tend to look very favorably upon homeschoolers applying to our college."

The 2001 Ontario Homeschooling Perspective

Ontario has a strong and vibrant homeschooling network. The two provincial umbrella groups are the Ontario Federation of Teaching Parents (OFTP) and the Ontario Christian Home Educators Connection (OCHEC). These two groups advocate for the collective interests of their membership with institutions such as the provincial government and school boards. They also provide support and information for the homeschooling community in the form of newsletters, conferences, and internet chat groups. While some families are members of both of these organizations, OFTP is non-sectarian, while OCHEC supports a Christian perspective.

There are also local support groups which organize activities, field trips, conferences, learning co-ops with other homeschooled students, and meetings with educational speakers. Homeschoolers also participate in activities organized within their local communities such as theatre groups, athletic clubs, service organizations, and church activities. Some students will take one or two courses at a local public school with a sympathetic/supportive principal or even take courses at a day school or community college. Tutors may be sought to teach particular skills, such as a foreign language or a musical instrument.

More and more parents feel confident in their ability to adequately prepare their children academically for post-secondary education. The availability of the Internet, email and libraries makes information on any topic easily accessible along with the experts who make the news and discoveries in the first place.

Along with this, there is a whole industry that has developed that caters to the homeschooling population, making science equipment, textbooks, curricula, and indeed entire high school programs custom made with a diploma upon completion, if that is the route the family wishes to take. There are e-learning courses, correspondence college and university courses, AP courses, and distance diploma opportunities.

In Ontario there is a limited availability of Ontario secondary course credits through the Independent Learning Centre and the Virtual Learning Centre although it is believed that the selection of courses available will be expanded in the very near future. Some of our local students are taking courses through the Alberta Distance Learning Centre, New Brunswick Community College, School of Tomorrow Canada in Manitoba, and Athabasca University in Alberta, and others have chosen to take courses through institutions based in the United States.

With this dizzying array of academic resources available, combined with activities organized by local homeschool support groups and communities, homeschooled students are able to pursue their interests and develop their skills without the limitations that would be imposed in a more traditional setting. Therein lies one of the great strengths of a homeschooling approach. "Parents can advocate for evolution, or they can create a "boy-centered" curriculum without fear of offending a special interest group. Teenage homeschooled students have the luxury to pursue more than academics, like managing a goat farm, training for a triathlon or volunteering to build a church in Mexico."

While this works in favour of supporting the diverse educational alternatives that homeschoolers across the province can choose to adopt, parents and students are unsure of how their choices will be received by colleges and universities. To date, homeschoolers in

Ontario have had no clear directions from our local publicly funded universities as to what steps they should take to prepare for the application process. The University Project has been inviting families of students who have already entered post secondary institutions to fill out a survey describing their experience, and the issues that arose. In most cases, Ontario based universities have reiterated their requirement for an OSSD which home educated students do not have access to.

The survey reveals that most of these students have been gaining access to universities "through the side door". By taking some university courses as a "special student" they are able to demonstrate academic ability and preparedness for the distractions of campus life before full time acceptance. Some students attend a private institution such as Redeemer College or St. Augustine's and then transfer. Very few students have gained admittance based on their homeschool studies and many have chosen to take the path of least resistance and have applied out of province and to the United States where policies are well established and institutions are much more accessible, as is scholarship money.

One of our own Ontario students will be heading to Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts this fall. On February 1st, her Mother Dian wrote to our project list:

"my oldest daughter homeschooled off-and-on for her high school years, and applied to American schools without a high school diploma (she had transcripts from grades 8 and 10 only). We gave up on the Canadian universities quite early, as most of those we contacted had trouble even understanding the concept of "home" school. The American schools really do evaluate the "whole student" in a way that is unheard of in Canada, where the only thing that matters is GPA.

"However, yesterday my daughter received her acceptance to Smith College (her first choice), a women's college with an Ivy League reputation that offers need-based financial aid. She received the maximum package offered to international students attending the school, worth about \$29,000 US each year for four years. The expected family contribution is about \$4,000 US per year. This is for everything--tuition, room and board, books, spending money, and health insurance. So yes, I will spend less sending her to the States than I would to send her to a Canadian university. And while we are thrilled at her acceptance to Smith, I find it sad that "the best and brightest" once again end up going to the States to get what they need."

Although many homeschoolers have chosen to homeschool to avoid the government imposed curriculum, thousands of homeschoolers across North America have done well when they entered or re-entered conventional schools, the workforce, or college and university. They have a sterling track record in areas that really matter. Homeschoolers ask, "Why should we judge ourselves by conventional school standards such as a government imposed standardized curriculum?"

The Universities' Perspective

We have attempted to tackle the difficult issue of how to select for successful university students from the perspective of admissions officers. First, how would you define a "successful" student? Attached as [Appendix A](#) is a National Post story describing a research study being conducted by James Parker, a professor of psychology at Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario.

"The research that's out there has tended to focus on their high school marks or intelligence and cognitive abilities. We know a lot about the relationship between traditional IQ-like measures and academic success, but those aren't really great predictors [of who will succeed in university]," says Parker. Often, he says, it's the brightest students who drop out by the time they reach Christmas break. Parker's preliminary research to date suggests that emotional maturity has more to do with a student's successful transition from high school to university than these other measures.

Seanna Watson is a MIT Educational Counsellor. We contacted her with the following request: "we are attempting to gather information about the types of students that succeed in university." If first year retention rates are possible indicators of "successful" students, we may have something to learn from MIT which has an attrition rate of 2% (or as they like to put it... a retention rate of 98%!).

"I find it interesting that the qualities that MIT is looking for are not necessarily common to other post-secondary institutions, but possibly more likely to be possessed by homeschoolers. As I noted, MIT does not have any requirement for HS diploma. They do, however rely heavily (but not exclusively) on standardized testing - SATs etc. For example, the vast majority of MIT students will have at least 700 on their math SAT, however, MIT does not have a cutoff score below which they will categorically deny admission. MIT is looking for sufficient academic skill that a student will be able to handle the workload. (They have an extremely low 1st year attrition rate - 2%) Beyond that, non-academic achievements are what will distinguish the successful applicants, with an emphasis on personal development, community involvement and leadership skills in a wide variety of areas (could be extra-curricular in school, employment, hobbies, sports, religious, cultural, volunteer, service groups etc). When I interview prospective MIT students, I concentrate on their attitude/outlook on life, what they want to get from MIT and what they will give to the MIT community, as well as their initiative, drive, and commitment to learning....It seems that the current Ontario university admissions program relies heavily on highschool performance (for example, Queen's admission information states that candidates with an OAC grade average above a certain threshold (determined by program) are automatically admitted.) I have no information as to their current 1st year attrition rate, though I know in the past it has tended to be high. To answer the question on how to select for the traits required for success: the university environment requires students to be committed to learning, and to be (or quickly become) mature and independent. Applicants who have been unschooled, for example, will likely have these traits. This should be discernable by examining the student's portfolio, transcript or equivalent, and CV. Obviously, the university also requires certain academic aptitudes. Presumably, the prospective students will need to provide evidence that they have the required pre-requisites and qualifications. Common sense would suggest that a student with excellent marks in the pre-requisite OAC (and other) courses should be a candidate for admission, regardless of whether this student has acquired a OSSD."

Additional information on MIT's admission policy is provided in Appendix C which contains Sample Admission Policies.

So in the case of MIT, academic preparation is important and is measured by the academic courses completed, and a rather heavily weighted SAT score. Note that before applying to universities, homeschoolers often enroll in a course at a local college or in a summer

program at a competitive university to show that they can handle both the academic rigor and the social distractions of college life.

Non-academic attributes include: commitment to learning, maturity and independence. We also have evidence that emotional maturity is a predictor of post-secondary success. How can procedures be designed to select for these traits? The common criteria that many post-secondary institutions in the States use when assessing homeschool applications are the transcript (often prepared by a parent listing all relevant courses taken from different sources and grades received) and/or portfolios, the standardized test score (SAT or ACT), interviews, letters of recommendation, essay written by the student.

Obviously, it will take longer to assess an application based on these criteria. Large state universities are more resistant to unconventional applications than are small private colleges simply because of economics: it takes more time, and therefore more money, for admissions officers to read meaningful application materials than it does for them to glance at a GPA or an SAT score and plug it into a formula. However, our universities will not be dealing with vast numbers of applications.

The following excerpt of a letter that Stanford sends to homeschooling applicants reveals what they feel are important factors in the selection of outstanding students.

STANFORD INFORMATION LETTER FOR HOMESCHOOLERS

This is a portion of the letter that Stanford University (<http://www.stanford.edu/>), California, is currently sending to all homeschoolers who inquire about Stanford admissions. The excerpt here is used with the permission of Growing Without Schooling, who reprinted it in their March/April, 1997 issue.

. . . During the last few years we have seen a steady increase in applications from families who are homeschooling their children. Such students are no longer unusual for us, and several are usually admitted and enroll at Stanford each year. They are, of course, still a small minority in our applicant pool. We are scrupulously fair in evaluating these applicants, and they are not disadvantaged in the admissions process. At the same time, as you may already recognize, these applicants present us with some special challenges, and in what follows I will suggest how your students can best address these issues when they apply.

First, we do not have a required curriculum or set of courses for applicants to Stanford. . . . Primarily, we want them to be able to demonstrate that they have successfully undertaken a serious, rigorous course of study. They should definitely provide a detailed description of their curriculum when they apply, but it is not necessary to follow a prescribed or approved homeschooling program. All the ones I have seen are reasonably good; the central issue for us is HOW they have gone about the learning process, not how many hurdles they have jumped.

The most obvious difficulty homeschooled students face is the lack of a conventional high school transcript. This is actually not as serious a problem as you might expect since there is not a great deal of difference between someone with no grades at all and someone with excellent grades but from a small, rural high school with which we are otherwise unfamiliar. Grades are more meaningful when they help us distinguish between students in larger high schools.

Homeschooled records lack such a comparative context, of course. In a less competitive world, where we could take all qualified students, such comparisons would be unnecessary. But we must select a few (fewer than 20% each year) especially talented and interesting applicants from a large pool of able students.

Anyway your students can stand out academically can help their cause.

In all students, we look for a clear sense of their intellectual growth and quest for knowledge. What is their level of intellectual vitality? How have they sustained their curiosity? Homeschooled students may even have a potential advantage over others in this aspect of the application since they have consciously chosen and pursued an independent course of study. In particular, we would like to hear from them in the application about how the family chose homeschooling, how the learning was organized, and what benefits (and costs, if any) they have derived from the experience.

Overall, the students' writing about themselves and their education can play an even more central role in their application than it would for a conventional high school student. This kind of self-inquiry is difficult for some students because our society tends to discourage reflection about intellectual questions, as opposed to vocational goals, but we strongly encourage the effort, as much for the educational benefits of taking stock of oneself as for the admissions process.

This is doubly important at Stanford because, unlike some independent colleges, we do not use interviews as part of the admissions process, either for homeschooled students or anyone else. The entire evaluation is based on the written application and supporting materials.

With little other quantitative information about them, homeschooled students' standardized test scores (SAT, ACT) also take on more significance than they might for other students. Normally, test scores are factored in along with grades, rank in class, and a judgment of the quality of the school and the student's program. Tests are never decisive by themselves. We require the SAT I or the ACT, but we do not require any SAT II Subject Tests (previously known as Achievement Tests). However, we do strongly recommend them, and it is even more important for homeschooled students to take them simply because we hesitate to rely too much on any single piece of data such as an SAT I score.

Another issue is recommendations. Typically, we require three recommendations, two from teachers of the student's choice and one from a guidance counsellor or other school official. The parents of a homeschooled applicant can write one recommendation in place of all three, and while these are helpful in conveying in detail the context of the student's educational experience, they also lack one crucial element, the objectivity a regular teacher may have of being able to compare the child with other students they have taught. We do not expect parents to make such a comparison (all parents are naturally proud of their own children), but we have to compare them to thousands of applicants for whom we have some objective view. Of course teachers and guidance counsellors can be biased too. For this reason we ask for three letters in the hope that they will independently reinforce each other. If a student is able to take a community college course or two during their high school years or has a tutor outside the family as part of the homeschooling program, these teachers can write the teacher recommendations and thus provide some non-parental evaluation. In other words, anything they can do to support their applications with standard credentials

will reduce any misgivings we might have about admitting a student with no recent formal education experience.

Sometimes homeschooled students have difficulty displaying a high level of social involvement normally found in extra-curricular activities, since they not have team sports, student government, a band, a newspaper, an honour society, etc. . . . Yet this might be less of an obstacle than one might first expect. We regularly see applications from [school] students whose main focus of non-academic activity is outside of school. They are often involved in sports, community service, religious life, drama, local politics, or work with a dedication and energy that we find very attractive, and easily comparable to conventional high school activities..."

The U.S. Model

We contacted Dan Crabtree, Director of College & Career Guidance at Wheaton Academy in Illinois, known as one of the homeschool friendly institutions. Because the surrounding area has a high number of home-schooled students, Wheaton holds workshops that help home-schoolers understand what colleges are looking for in the admissions process. He gave us a brief history of admissions in the U.S. and it is interesting how their past is mirrored in our present.

"My experience with the admission of home schoolers is similar to that of others in college admissions offices. We simply began receiving applications for admission from home schooled students, and we had to figure out how we were going to deal with them. Other colleges (mostly private colleges, which tended to receive more home schooled applications in the earlier years) did the same thing, evolving their own policies by trial and error. There was no concerted effort among colleges to come up with a standardized procedure.

However, a general consensus has emerged among colleges that have had significant numbers of home schooled applicants. It is this: these students tend to be above average in their academic preparation, and we should not impose different (or additional) standards than we require for other applicants. Now this does not mean that we settle for inadequate information. But just as we know that two similar-looking transcripts from two different high schools may not really indicate similar preparation, we recognize the need to look at the total applicant -- grades, curriculum, standardized test scores, reading lists, writing sample, interview (if desired or a general requirement), recommendations -- to assess whether the student is one we wish to offer admission.

Personally, I believe it is legitimate to place more weight on the standardized test (SAT or ACT), which I see as a great equalizer. Every student is required to take one of these tests for admission to most colleges, and since it is administered to all students under similar circumstances, I believe it can be a good indicator of the student's academic preparation. I also believe the admissions office has a right to expect that the home schooler will provide sufficient credentials (reading lists, course syllabi, work samples, etc.) to demonstrate the work he or she has done. I have attended a number of sessions on home schooling. Frankly, they have all concluded with this same theme: that admissions offices simply need to work with home schooled applicants to get reasonable evidence of their readiness for college."

During the initial years, colleges and universities were asking homeschoolers to jump through unreasonable hoops in order to complete the application process. They required students to submit different test scores encouraging students to take not only the SAT but several SATII subject tests as well. Often they would require a GED score as well which homeschoolers felt was an insult due to its reputation for being required of all high school dropouts. In response to these unfair and excessive requests, individual homeschoolers and support organizations such as the Home School Legal Defense Association and the National Home Education Research Institute lobbied powerful government officials and several pieces of legislation have been passed in the last couple of years that uphold the right of homeschoolers to equal opportunity and access to post secondary education.

United States House of Representatives and Senate Committee Reports accompanying Pub. L. No. 105-244 (Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act) encourage colleges and universities receiving federal funding to discontinue their discrimination against home schoolers. The House Report specifically recommends that colleges and universities change any admissions policies which force home schooled students to take additional tests beyond what is required of traditionally schooled students, including the GED and the SAT II exams:

The Committee is aware that many colleges and universities now require applicants from non-public, private, or non-traditional secondary programs (including home schools) to submit scores from additional standardized tests . . . (GED or . . . SAT-II) in lieu of a transcript/diploma from an accredited high school. Historically . . . [the] SAT II was not design for, and until recently was not used to determine college admissions. Given that standardized test scores (ACT or SAT) and portfolio- or performance-based assessments may also provide a sound basis for an admission decision regarding these students, the Committee recommends that colleges and universities consider using these assessments for applicants educated in non-public, private, and non-traditional programs rather than requiring them to undergo additional types of standardized testing. Requiring additional testing only of students educated in these settings could reasonably be seen as discriminatory. . . .

The Committee believes that college admissions should be determined based on academic ability of the student and not the accreditation status of the school in which he or she received a secondary education.

Some state legislatures and departments of education, recognizing the abilities and achievements of most home educated students, have written laws or regulations addressing the problems a homeschooler may face at college entrance.

A New Mexico statute, which passed in 1997, reads:

In determining the standard of requirements for admission to their respective institutions, boards of regents [for institutions of higher education] shall not require a student who has completed the requirements of a home-based or non-public school educational program and who has submitted test scores that otherwise qualify him for admission to that institution, to obtain or submit proof of having obtained a general education development certificate. In determining requirements for admission, boards of regents shall evaluate and treat applicants from home-based education programs or non-public school fairly and in a nondiscriminatory manner.

North Carolina House Bill 746 (1997), which was passed by the General Assembly and signed into law by the Governor, directed the University of North Carolina Board of Governors to review the University's admissions procedures, practices and requirements regarding applicants from home schools in compliance with North Carolina law. The law states that the new policy must "not arbitrarily differentiate between applicants based upon whether the applicant attended a public or a lawfully operated nonpublic school."

The South Dakota Board of Regents policy referring to home educated students allows a composite score of 18 on the ACT test as the only academic requirement of admission. In a letter to the University & Community College System of Nevada, the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education says that it "does not require any additional methods of assessment for home-schooled students applying to colleges or universities."

The Montana Board of Regents of Higher Education amended the requirements for admission to four-year colleges in the Montana University System. Students who have not graduated from high school and students who completed their secondary education through home schooling may fulfill the requirement of high school graduation by either obtaining a General Educational Development (GED) equivalency diploma or achieving a satisfactory score on the American College Test (ACT) or Computerized Adaptive Placement Assessment and Support System (COMPASS) examinations.

In 1999, the Governor of Illinois signed H.B. 1522 (enrolled as Public Act 91-0374), requiring all public colleges and universities to admit students who have graduated from non-recognized schools if their SAT or ACT scores are acceptable.

In addition to changing homeschool admission policies to make procedures more equitable for home educated students, post-secondary institutions are starting to develop scholarships to help attract homeschooled students.

As a result of the Oral Roberts study mentioned earlier, the University created a unique Home School College Preparatory Program for home schooled students to earn a semester of college credit at home in advance and established a \$6,000 scholarship especially for home school graduates, above and beyond all other financial aid.

Eager to attract these bright young students, other colleges are developing home school scholarships. Belhaven College (MS) grants \$1,000 a year to qualified home educated students. Nyack College (NY) says their "experience with homeschoolers has been a positive one" and awards up to \$12,000 to homeschoolers. College of the Southwest (MN) which awards up to \$3,150 a year per home school student says that the general rule for home school students at the college is that they are "very involved in campus life in addition to doing well academically."

Even home educated athletes are treated on an equal footing with their public schooled peers. The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics and the National Christian College Athletic Association both have guidelines for homeschoolers. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) has "guidelines to help standardize eligibility for home-schooled athletes. According to the guidelines, home-schooled athletes who have sufficiently high standardized-test scores and proof that they took at least 13 courses that meet the association's core-course standards may be automatically awarded freshman eligibility." An NCAA spokeswoman said that from 1988 to 1993, as many as 10 home-taught athletes

applied for waivers each year. "In each of the past three years [1994-1996]," she said, "that number has grown to more than 20." The number is now as high as 75 students a year. This year spokesman John Morris said that, during the 1998-99 school year, all 49 home schooled waiver applicants for Division I and all 20 for Division II were approved.

In the United States, colleges and universities are now encouraged to develop fair policies that don't put undue hardship on the non-traditional applicant.

A Harvard University admissions officer said most of their home educated students "have done very well. They usually are very motivated in what they do." Results of the SAT and SAT II, an essay, an interview, and a letter of recommendation are the main requirements for home educated applicants. "[Transcripts are] irrelevant because a transcript is basically a comparison to other students in the school."

In addition to Harvard, prominent schools like Yale (CT), Princeton (NJ), Texas A&M, Brown University (RI), the Carnegie Mellon Institute (PA), the Universities of Arizona, Maryland, Virginia, Hawaii and many others all have flexible transcript criteria, accept parental evaluations, and do not require any accreditation or a General Equivalency Diploma (GED). At Kansas State University and others like Lipscomb University and Middlebury College (VT), transcripts are optional.

Lewis and Clark College (OR) has a method of application called the "Portfolio Path" where a student can bypass standardized tests and instead be "reviewed on a myriad of things that would point to, and measure academic performance." The Universities of Minnesota and Mississippi also look at the all-around abilities demonstrated in a homeschooler's portfolio. University of Kentucky home school applicants "have to provide a portfolio of what they have done throughout their high school years" that is "creative and informative." A UK admissions officer also said, "Our homeschoolers (about 50) tend to be very bright, and have scored very high on standardized tests."

Standardized Tests

In the United States, it is part of post-secondary educational culture to have applicants, all applicants, provide an SAT or ACT score. It is part of the criteria that many schools use to validate grades that appear on the high school transcript for regular applicants. For homeschooled applicants the score is used to compare academic achievement with the general student population.

The following was extracted from the Ministry of Education and MTU web site:

Ontario has had very little tradition of standardized testing. Throughout the '50s and '60s, standardized exit exams in Grade 13 (departmental exams) were given in all subject areas, and formed the sole basis for entry to university. In the mid-1960s that changed: results from the exams were coupled with teacher's marks. In the late '60s, the exams were discontinued and teachers' marks became the only basis for university entrance. That change was made in part because it was learned that teachers' marks predicted university achievement as well as the exams. This should not be a surprise: one would expect that a teacher who has known a student for a year, and judged his or her performance on a variety of formal and informal criteria, would be a better predictor of potential success than any single test. Traditional tests, of the Grade 13 variety, tended to reflect ability to memorize

and regurgitate, and to bear up under stress - useful abilities, certainly, but not the kind of serious thinking and knowledge acquisition our schools should foster, and not the kind of shallow goals that should shape the curriculum.

As early as the late 1970s, evidence began to accumulate showing that high-stakes standardized testing policies were highly corruptible, creating greater incentives for cheating than for actually improving instruction, and that the use of standardized tests for accountability had actually narrowed curricula and driven instruction increasingly towards pedagogues, based on memorization and basic skills rather than improving educational quality.

In February of this year, University of California President Richard Atkinson's stunned a national group of college presidents by suggesting that the UC system drop the requirement of the SAT as part of the admissions process. This has caused a flurry of articles analyzing the strengths and particularly weaknesses of standardized testing in general. He recommended that "all campuses move away from admission processes that use narrowly defined quantitative formulas and instead adopt procedures that look at applicants in a comprehensive, holistic way." So, the SAT IIs stay, but should be weighed lightly. Atkinson hopes to "ensure that standardized tests [in general] do not have an undue influence" on admissions decisions. They should "illuminate the student's total record."

A new analysis by the National Center for Fair & Open Testing (FairTest) has found that nearly 400 bachelor degree-granting institutions already admit substantial numbers of their applicants without regard to SAT or ACT scores. FairTest's University Testing Reform Advocate Christina Perez stated, "The institutions on this list represent a sizeable movement within admissions offices around the nation to go 'test-score optional' as many schools realize that such tests are not needed for sound admissions practices.

In fact, most admissions officers - both at elite colleges and giant state schools - say they work hard not to put too much emphasis on SATs. They know, says Florida State admissions chief John Barnhill, that "the SAT doesn't measure heart." Although his office generally rejects applicants who score below 900, he remembers a student who was admitted with a 720 - but who had a 3.9 GPA. "We have space for students like that, provided they are in the special support program," he says. "I like the SAT, but I don't love it. I wish I could find something that was a more fair and accurate measure."

"Two Cheers for an end to the SAT" by Alfie Kohn appeared in the *Chronical of Higher Education* in March, 2001. Alfie Kohn writes and speaks widely on human behaviour, education and social theory. (See [Appendix B](#))

Developing Admission Policies

Here in Ontario, is it possible to make informed admissions decisions relating to homeschoolers by reviewing high school transcripts, the sole criteria that is required of traditional secondary school graduates and ask for nothing more?

Probably not.

We recognise the challenge inherent in basing admissions decisions on a portfolio of completed work. How can a student's highly individualized package be standardized for consideration? Should it be?

Should standardized test scores be required and if so, how should they be weighted?

Below is a description of portfolio vs. transcript assessment taken from a homeschool support site. While it is geared toward the homeschooling family, it may provide some insight into assessment using these tools.

Two types of family-generated documentation commonly accompany college applications from homeschooled students: a portfolio or a transcript.

With the portfolio approach, you are asking the school to understand and evaluate the student on your terms. Additionally, the portfolio acts as a screening device. The rationale here is, "If they can't handle this type of application, this college is not the right place for our student." Admissions officers reviewing portfolios will be looking for evidence of superior achievement in one or more areas. They will not necessarily be attempting to fit the student's accomplishments into their list of suggested high school studies.

Portfolio submissions do appear risky. However, some students will be better off with a portfolio than a transcript. A portfolio may best represent and depict the activities of unschoolers - those whose homeschooling is based on student-directed projects and on real world experiences. The unschooler who has pursued one or more interests in depth will have little trouble in making a good presentation.

In some cases the transcript magnifies weaknesses and obscures strengths. A student who has spent years developing and running a business can put his experience into transcript format; but his background will probably be more impressive as a portfolio presentation. An award-winning artist or a computer programmer who has successfully marketed his ideas may find himself in a similar position.

Some colleges and universities consider themselves highly innovative. They look for students with non-traditional backgrounds and non-traditional documentation. Examples would be Antioch College in Ohio and Colorado College in Colorado (see appendix G of the book). A portfolio submission usually impresses admissions officers at these non-traditional schools.

Put materials and documentation into a familiar format. List courses. Write course descriptions. Recount high school homeschooling on their terms. A transcript makes it easy for colleges to understand and categorize your student according to their criteria.

Homeschooled students who have used traditional and unit study materials, in whole or in part, will find that a transcript readily documents their work. A transcript also documents unschooling activities and projects, more easily than you might guess.

We ask that as individual universities address the issues that will inevitably arise, keep in mind the trends that admissions in the States has followed and maintain a "spirit" of openness and flexibility. We imagine there will be some growing pains for both the members of the homeschooling community who will be adjusting their approach to high school studies to respond to these developments and the admissions offices as they fine tune their policies over the next few years to select for "successful" candidates.

One admission officer wrote:

"Measurement of homeschool applications is time consuming and can be difficult for institutions that are not familiar with reviewing homeschool documents. It is necessary to thoroughly read many pages of documentation, gain an understanding of the various teaching methods used, and ascertain the student's degree of leadership and community involvement. Admissions personnel will spend 2-4 hours reviewing the admission materials for one student."

This will certainly pose a challenge for our universities. Initially, the numbers of homeschoolers applying are not great, and the quality of students entering the university as a result will add to the diversity and richness of the student population. A more holistic approach to assessment will also better prepare universities for the changing face of education as the growing alternatives inevitably impact the ways that students approach education in the future.

Appendix A

It's Not Always About Grades and Test Scores

A project to study who drops out of university and why.

by Jeannie Marshall

National Post, March 21, 2001

The first year of university is an anxious time for students and their parents. The parents want their children to buckle down, study hard and achieve the kind of academic success that will help them find lucrative jobs or get them into graduate school. The students want that, too. Yet half or more of all students who go to university do not graduate four years later. And grades seem to have little to do with who makes it through and who quits.

"The statistics on what happens to students who enrol in first year are depressing," says James Parker, a professor of psychology at Trent University in Peterborough, Ont. "The actual number of students who start out and those who end up graduating are not as high as most people think."

Parker has launched an enormous study to track those students who enrolled at Trent fresh out of high school for the year beginning September, 2000. He and his colleagues will follow 900 students for the next four years to see who drops out and to learn why they drop out and how universities can predict which students are at risk.

"The research that's out there has tended to focus on their high school marks or intelligence and cognitive abilities. We know a lot about the relationship between traditional IQ-like measures and academic success, but those aren't really great predictors [of who will succeed in university]," says Parker. Often, he says, it's the brightest students who drop out by the time they reach Christmas break.

Until now, there has been very little research on students' experiences at university. It's a time of huge change in their lives. For many, it's the first time they have lived away from

home. There is so much more going on in their lives at university than what takes place in the classroom.

Last year, Parker asked the more than 400 students in the first-year psychology course he teaches to participate in a pilot project. Parker and his research assistants looked at a number of factors, including the emotional and social skills of the students. Then they separated the data on the students and looked at those who achieved grades of 80% or more and compared them with the group who were below 60%.

"I thought, let's look at two extreme groups. The interesting thing was that there was no difference [between the two groups] in their high school grade point average," says Parker. "[But] when I compared them on their emotional intelligence, there were differences on every variable I included."

Because Parker's hunch that a person's success at university had more to do with their emotional maturity than their intelligence was borne out in the pilot study, he received financing to launch the larger study.

The main goal is to predict who will have difficulty coping so the school can support them and keep them enrolled. Parker explains that the current system can react only once a student is failing; by then, it is often too late to stop them from dropping out.

"Anyone who has been through this can remember what it's like. It's often the first time you have serious, adult relationships. Many a brilliant student who should be able to get through university intellectually is done in by the first serious relationship that doesn't turn out right," says Parker. "Or they might not know how to cope with being in love for the first time. Just because they are feeling that way, they still have to study for the mid-term."

Next year, Parker and his researchers will follow up with students who have left the university. Some will have moved to another university or a community college. Some may have taken a break to work for a year or two. But many never come back to school.

"So far, the research seems to suggest that what motivates a lot of students to drop out is isolation and loneliness," says Parker. "I've been at Trent for six years and watched some of our really good students not making it through and I know that intellectually they are top-notch. I'm interested in finding those factors that impede their success."

Appendix B

Two Cheers for an End to the SAT

By Alfie Kohn

Source: The Chronical Review, March 9, 2001

One imagines the folks at the College Board blushing deeply when, a few years back, they announced that the "A" in SAT no longer stood for "Aptitude." Scarlet, after all, would be an appropriate colour to turn while, in effect, conceding that the test wasn't -- and, let's face it, never had been -- a measure of intellectual aptitude. For a brief period, the examination was re-christened the Scholastic Assessment Test, a name presumably generated by the Department of Redundancy Department. Today, literally -- and perhaps figuratively -- SAT

doesn't stand for anything at all. It wasn't the significance of the shift in the SAT's name that recently produced an epiphany for Richard C. Atkinson, president of the University of California. Rather, the tipping point in deciding to urge the elimination of the SAT as a requirement for admission came last year during a visit to the upscale private school his grandchildren attend. There, he watched as 12-year-olds were drilled on verbal analogies, part of an extended training that, he said in announcing his proposal, "was not aimed at developing the students' reading and writing abilities but rather their test-taking skills." More broadly, he argued, "America's overemphasis on the SAT is compromising our educational system." Of course, it must be pointed out that U.C., assuming its policy-making bodies accept their president's advice, would not be the first institution to drop the SAT.

Hundreds of colleges and universities, including Bates, Bowdoin, Connecticut, and Mount Holyoke Colleges, no longer require the SAT or ACT. A survey by FairTest, a Cambridge, Mass.-based advocacy group, reported that such colleges are generally well-satisfied that "applicant pools and enrolled classes have become more diverse without any loss in academic quality." On balance, this latest and most significant challenge to the reign of the SAT is very welcome news indeed. There is a possible downside as well, but we should begin by recognizing that even before colleges began hopping off the SAT bandwagon, the assumption that they needed something like the test to help them decide whom to admit was difficult to defend, if only because of a powerful counterexample to our north: No such test is used in Canada. But the more one learns about the SAT in particular, the more one wonders what took Atkinson so long, and what is taking many of his counterparts even longer. Consider:

- * The SAT is a measure of resources more than of reasoning. Year after year, the College Board's own statistics depict a virtually linear correlation between SAT scores and family income. Each rise in earnings (measured in \$10,000 increments) brings a commensurate rise in scores. Other research, meanwhile, has found that more than half the difference among students' scores can be explained purely on the basis of parents' level of education.

- * Aggregate scores don't reflect educational achievement. SAT results are still sometimes used to compare one state with another or one year with another. Unfortunately, not only is the test voluntary, but participation rates vary enormously by state and district. The researchers Brian Powell and Lala Carr Steelman, writing in a 1996 issue of the Harvard Educational Review, reported that those rates account for a whopping 85 percent of the variance in scores; when fewer students take the test, a state's results end up looking much better. Similarly, even if it is true that average national scores have declined over the decades (once we factor in the statistical readjustment that took place in 1996), that is mostly because more students, relatively speaking, are now taking the test.

- * Individual scores don't reflect a student's intellectual depth. The verbal section of the SAT is basically just a vocabulary test. It is not a measure of aptitude or of subject-area competency. So what does it measure, other than the size of students' houses? An interesting 1995 study with students at East Carolina University classified them as taking a "surface" approach to their assignments (meaning they memorized facts and did as little as possible); a "deep" approach (informed by a genuine desire to understand and a penchant for connecting current lessons with previous knowledge); or an "achieving" approach (where performance, particularly as compared with that of others, mattered more than learning). SAT scores turned out to be significantly correlated with both the surface and achieving

approaches, but not at all with the deep approach. (That finding has been replicated with the results of other standardized tests taken by younger students, lending support to the criticism that such examinations tend to measure what matters least.)

* SAT's don't predict the future. A considerable amount of research, including but not limited to a summary of more than 600 studies published by the College Board in 1984, has found that only about 12 to 16 percent of the variance in freshman grades could be explained by SAT scores, suggesting that they are not particularly useful even with respect to that limited variable -- and virtually worthless at predicting how students will fare after their freshman year (and whether they will graduate).

* SAT's don't contribute to diversity. Far from offering talented minority students a way to prove their worth, the overall effect of the SAT has been to ratify entrenched patterns of discrimination. Maria Blanco, a regional counsel with the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, remarked recently that the SAT "has turned into a barrier to students of colour," because it "keeps out very qualified kids who have overcome obstacles but don't test very well." Colleges looking to put together a racially and ethnically diverse student body are, therefore, already likely to minimize the significance of standardized-test scores.

Unhappily, though, some people committed to affirmative action -- and even more who are opposed to it -- have treated the SAT as a marker for merit and then argued about whether it is legitimate to set scores aside. Should a desire for equity sometimes override the desire for excellence? But that question is utterly misconceived. SAT's, like other standardized tests, do not further the cause of equity or excellence. Such tests privilege the privileged and reflect a skill at taking tests. Few people -- other than those who profit handsomely from its administration -- will mourn the SAT when it finally breathes its last.

And now the bad news: Unless we are very careful, a long-overdue move to jettison SAT scores may simply ratchet up the significance accorded to other admissions criteria that are little better and possibly even worse. Atkinson suggested that, at least in the short run, colleges might switch to the SAT 2, better known as achievement tests. While that may be a step forward in some respects, it may have the effect of creating a standardized, exam-based high-school curriculum that could squeeze out other kinds of teaching. That is already beginning to happen as states impose their own exit tests: Teachers feel compelled to cover vast amounts of content, often superficially, rather than letting students discover ideas.

The more ominous threat, though, is that, as the SAT fades, it will be replaced by high-school grades. There is a widespread assumption that less emphasis on scores as an admissions criterion has to mean more emphasis on grades, as though nature has decreed an inverse relationship between the two. But for grades to be given more emphasis would be terribly unfortunate. On the most obvious level, grades are unreliable indicators of student achievement. A "B" from one teacher or school doesn't equate to a "B" from somewhere else; in fact, some studies have shown that a given assignment may even receive two different grades from a single teacher who reads it at two different times. Most people know that is true; tests like the SAT are more dangerous because they are falsely assumed to be objective.

What is far more disturbing about even the current emphasis on grades, let alone the prospect of enhancing their significance, is the damage they do when students are led to compulsively groom their transcripts.

Researchers have found three consistent effects of focusing attention on traditional grades. First, interest in the learning itself tends to decline. Many studies have shown that the more people are rewarded for doing something, the more they tend to lose interest in whatever they had to do to get the reward. While it's not impossible for a student to be concerned about getting high marks and also to enjoy playing with ideas, the practical reality is that there is a negative correlation between a grade orientation and a learning orientation.

Second, focusing on grades tends to reduce the quality of students' thinking. One series of studies by the researcher Ruth Butler found that graded students were significantly less creative than those who received only qualitative feedback. The more the task required creative thinking, in fact, the worse the performance of students who knew they were going to receive a grade. In another experiment by two University of Rochester researchers, reported in 1987, students who were told they would be graded on how well they learned a social-studies lesson had more trouble understanding the main point of the assigned text than did students who were told that no grades would be involved. Even on a measure of rote recall, the graded group remembered fewer facts a week later.

Finally, concern about grades often reduces a student's preference for challenging tasks. Those who cut corners -- who choose short books, undemanding projects, and "gut" courses -- are not being lazy so much as rational; they are responding to the imperative to bring up their grade-point averages.

If it's worrisome that SAT coaching sessions take time away from meaningful intellectual pursuits, then it's worse that an admissions policy that causes students to become obsessed with grades could undermine the intellectual value of virtually everything they do in high school. Indeed, it can create intellectual dispositions that persist in and beyond college. From that perspective, complaints about "grade inflation" are a spectacular exercise in missing the point. The problem isn't that too many students are getting A's; the problem is that too many students are getting the idea that the whole point of school is to get A's.

The only thing worse than placing added emphasis on the G.P.A. is placing added emphasis on relative G.P.A. Some state systems now want to guarantee acceptance to all students in a top percentage of their class. Here, the emphasis is not merely on performance (as opposed to learning), but on victory. A considerable body of data demonstrates that creating competition among students is decidedly detrimental with respect to achievement and motivation to learn. The urgent question should not be whether high-school class rank is correlated with college grades, but whether secondary schools can maintain (or create) a focus on intellectual exploration when their students are forced to view their classmates as obstacles to their own success.

Where does all this leave us? Those willing to ask the truly radical questions about college admissions might consider an observation offered 30 years ago during a public lecture at the Educational Testing Service by the psychologist David McClelland. Rather than asking what criteria best predict success in higher education, he asked whether colleges should even be looking for the most-qualified students. "One would think that the purpose of education is precisely to improve the performance of those who are not doing very well," he

mused. "If the colleges were interested in proving that they could educate people, high-scoring students might be poor bets because they would be less likely to show improvement in performance.

"Many of us will find that challenge too unsettling, preferring that we continue to admit those students who will probably be easiest to educate. But even if we are looking for the "best" students, we ought to see G.P.A. numbers and SAT scores as a matched set of flawed criteria. Grades-and-tests, at best, will predict future grades-and-tests. Although some would dispute that, there is good evidence that grades don't predict later-life success, in occupational or intellectual terms. In the 1980's, a review of 35 studies, published in the American Educational Research Journal, concluded that academic indicators (grades and tests) from college - never mind high school - accounted for less than 3 percent of the variance in eventual occupational performance as judged by income, job-effectiveness ratings, and job satisfaction. Moreover, those indicators had no predictive power whatsoever for M.D.'s and Ph.D.'s.

When Mount Holyoke College, after a lengthy study by faculty members, announced last year that it would stop requiring students to submit SAT scores, the president, Joanne Creighton, did not limit her criticism to that test. "There has been a kind of reductionism in higher education, reducing students and institutions to numbers," she said. Similarly, Atkinson said that he had recommended "that all campuses move away from admission processes that use narrowly defined quantitative formulas and instead adopt procedures that look at applicants in a comprehensive, holistic way.

"Doing so will not be an easy sell, if only because it is faster and therefore cheaper for universities that hear from tens of thousands of applicants to continue reducing each one to a numerical formula, rather than to weigh each as an individual. A move from SAT to G.P.A. - or SAT 1 to SAT 2 - will merely fine-tune the formula. That would be a pity, because the attention given Atkinson's proposal has provided us with an opportunity to confront larger and more lasting issues.

Alfie Kohn is the author of eight books on education and human behaviour, including *The Schools Our Children Deserve: Moving Beyond Traditional Classrooms* and *"Tougher Standards"* (Houghton Mifflin, 1999).

Appendix C

Sample Admission Guidelines and Letters Related to Policy Development

American Association of State Colleges and Universities Letter to Its Members on Homeschool Grads

We write to you regarding the issue of college and university admission standards for students from non-public, non-traditional educational programs, which has emerged in the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. The House Committee on Education and the Workforce will address this issue in the non-binding committee report accompanying H.R. 6, the House reauthorization bill. A copy of this report will be posted on AASCU On Line (as part of a bulletin on the final House bill) as soon as it is available, and a copy of this letter

and the report language with AASCU's analysis and remarks will be sent immediately after this posting.

As you may be aware, an increasing number of Americans are receiving their primary and secondary instruction from non-public, non-traditional programs, particularly home schools. Such programs are legal in every state, and standardized test results indicate that students from these programs perform well in relation to their peers nationwide in a number of academic areas.

The skills and experiences acquired by these students, however, often do not fit neatly with college and university admission requirements, particularly with respect to diplomas and transcripts from accredited high schools. Moreover, recent research indicates that many higher education institutions do not have formal or informal policies for handling applications of graduates from non-public, non-traditional programs. Solutions offered by a number of colleges and universities have propelled this issue onto the policy agenda. Some institutions require students from non-public, non-traditional programs to submit scores from additional standardized tests (such as the General Educational Development [GED] and Scholastic Aptitude Test subject area [SAT-II] examinations) in lieu of a diploma/transcript from an accredited high school. These policies have been criticized by some in the home school community, who see them as discriminatory and onerous given the statistical evidence on the overall performance of these students. Two states have passed laws prohibiting public colleges and universities from requiring additional test scores of students from non-public, non-traditional programs if they otherwise qualify for admission.

AASCU's view is that the setting of college and university admission standards is a responsibility that belongs with the institutions themselves and their governing entities. At the same time, we urge colleges and universities to address this issue if they have not already done so, and to engage in a dialogue with the providers of non-public, non-traditional programs in forming admission policies regarding their graduates. We further urge that colleges and universities consider using portfolio- and performance-based assessments in making admission decisions regarding these applicants as an alternative to additional standardized testing. The students at our nation's colleges and universities are a testament to its diversity and promise. The policies by which these students are admitted must balance the need for an accurate assessment of their academic preparation with a sensitivity to their special circumstances and attributes. It is our hope that this balance will guide you as you address this and other admission-related issues in the days ahead.

National Center for Home Education's Recommended College Admission Policies

As studies consistently demonstrate, home educated high school graduates offer an academically successful and socially diverse background. Home schoolers' strong work ethic high moral values contribute to their success in college. More and more colleges and universities are recognizing their unique capabilities and circumstances. In light of the proven success of home education at the elementary, secondary, and post-secondary levels, the National Centre for Home Education recommends that colleges adopt specific written home school admission policies which reflect the following:

1. Home educated applicants should not be required to submit an accredited diploma or GED. Accreditation does nothing to measure a student's knowledge or what he was taught, it only reflects where he was taught. In addition, a GED carries with it the stigma of being a high school drop-out. Home schoolers are not drop-outs, but talented, conscientious students who have completed their high school education. They should not be treated as drop-outs by being required to obtain a GED.
2. If a transcript is required, colleges should have flexible guidelines for records and documentation of the basic credit hours for high school completion. Some colleges supply home schoolers with a "Home School Credit Evaluation Form" that may be completed in lieu of a transcript.
3. As the primary instructors, parents should be recognized as capable of evaluating their student's academic competence in letters of recommendation. Schools frequently ask for an additional evaluation from someone outside the home.
4. SAT/ACT scores and portfolios or performance-based assessments provide schools with a solid basis for admission. Like most colleges, the University of Missouri-Columbia relies heavily on test results and the dozen or so home schoolers they have in every freshman class "tend to have excellent test score results." In addition, UMC emphasized that a GPA is "not a factor in admitting home schoolers."
5. Mandatory SAT II testing in specific subjects is an unnecessary roadblock. Requiring only home school students to take these tests, in addition to the SAT, is discriminatory. Colleges will discourage home schoolers from seeking admission by holding them to this unreasonable standard. SAT/ACT testing is more than enough to indicate the academic proficiency of the student.
6. A bibliography of high school literature and an essay are two admission criteria which accurately evaluate a student's life experience and thinking skills. "These home schoolers write fabulous essays!" said Emory University (GA) "Very creative!"
7. Interviews and a review of extracurricular activities are two ways to determine overall student proficiency and leadership qualities.

The National Center hopes that it assists college admission offices in adopting reasonable policies for home school applicants, taking into account their unique circumstances and talents. "We look at them in their own individual situations," was the welcoming attitude expressed by a director of admissions in New Jersey. "We just try to be open minded."

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Excerpt from "Admissions Requirements for Homeschoolers Applying to Maritime Universities"

By Lynn MacDonald

Some general remarks before I list requirements of each university individually:

1. No one has a set policy.

2. The more you can supply, the better equipped the institution is to evaluate the student's ability to study at post-secondary level. (Keep records & a portfolio!)

3. Most are very accommodating and hope to serve us.

4. Everyone had a different story about the SAT's: It tests aptitude. No ... it tests intelligence. No ... it tests knowledge base. It's useful. It's not applicable. What I do know is that there are two sets of them. The SAT I is a general test and the SAT II is a set of subject specific tests. There is also some disagreement about the usefulness of the GED.

As an encouragement to us all, here is an accumulation of the admissions officers' and registrars' comments on how they find homeschoolers in general: Several stated that they find homeschoolers better equipped to take on higher-level study than the general population, as they are: used to studying, very focussed, intelligent, seriously intentioned, good students, very disciplined, self-driven, well-organized, academically solid. I know this list of local post-secondary schools is by no means exhaustive, but it's a start and will give us some direction in our high school planning and goals. I hope it proves useful to you. Please feel free to share any personal experiences with any of these or other maritime schools. These may be helpful to us all.

Acadia University (Wolfville, N.S.) 542-2201

Anne Scott, Manager of Admissions

If the student were following a prescribed curriculum, they would like information on the organization and curriculum. They would evaluate it for acceptable level for entrance, especially for Math, Calculus, and Sciences. If student is not following a prescribed curriculum, they would like the results of SAT, which give placements in specific subject areas (i.e., Math, English, etc.) SAT is helpful for Science in particular. Once the results of tests and application are received, they would have some dialogue with the student. They want to find out if the student is ready for university material and ultimately want the student who goes there to be successful.

Atlantic Baptist University (Moncton, N.B.)

1-888-968-6228 (TOLL FREE)

Shawna Peveril, Director of Admissions

The expectation for homeschoolers would be the same as for public school students. They are looking for a transcript of grades 10-12 level courses (Keep extensive records and a portfolio) Include extra detail on the program being used. It is good to have a test. People seem more comfortable with a test. Not the SAT as they consider it as just a test of aptitude, not academic ability. They wish that there was some standardized test but there's nothing formulated yet. ABU works hard at making it fair for the student. About 1-4 homeschoolers apply per year. Extra Note: This was the "homeschool friendliest" institution I talked to, a real pleasure. A number of their professors homeschool their own children and Administration generally finds homeschoolers well-behaved, thoughtful, and intelligent children and young people. Scholarships are based on academic performance in high school courses. What is considered a passing mark in your curriculum? (Example 80?) For

scholarship consideration aim for marks of 90 percent. There would be a greater expectation than just a passing grade. Bursaries are based on financial need.

Dalhousie University (Halifax, N.S.) 494-2211

It would be good to have some kind of testing, but not necessarily SAT, as they believe this tests intelligence instead of academic performance. It may be beneficial to sit for public school exams. (NOTE: according to Dept. of Education Regional Education Officer, Nancy Mosher's office, this is not permissible, but this may change with your area, REO, and high school principal.) The GED would be below the standard of homeschool students. They are open to anything provided if student doesn't have those tests. They will look at anything presented, and evaluate each student on an individual basis. There have been no difficulties with homeschoolers who have enrolled. Homeschoolers are not eligible to receive entrance scholarships (see contradictory side note), but can earn scholarships once the student gets there.

Just a side note about Dalhousie University: Here is a quote from an Ontario mother, Marie-Marthe Jalbert, as it appeared in Home School Legal Defense Association of Canada's May/June 2000 issue of Court Report and Communiqué. "They did have a policy regarding Homeschoolers. We sent what they were asking for, and ...Genevieve was accepted, based on her academics, into the Department of Music, and she was awarded a \$1500 scholarship. This university was wonderful to deal with. Whether we spoke to General Admissions or to the Department of Music, they were organized, pleasant and obliging. I can only recommend them." Mme. Jalbert was comparing Dalhousie to some Ontario and Quebec institutions. I, personally, found Dalhousie the least receptive, although not unpleasant or unwilling, of all the folks I interviewed. This must show how open and accommodating our local schools are on the whole.

Mount Allison University (Sackville, N.B.)

506-364-2269

Main Admissions Office, 506-364-2113

Katie Odell, Assistant Manager of Admissions

The University looks very favourably on homeschooling. Their best students are from homeschooling backgrounds. They use an individual basis for evaluation, as homeschoolers are all following individual programs. If the student is following a curriculum, state what it is and give an outline of it. (Keep records and a portfolio!) If student is not following a curriculum (Keep records and portfolio!), it is beneficial to take the AP and/or the IB tests. The Mount has a few homeschoolers every year. Mt. Allison is a small, very involved school where homeschoolers are often very comfortable. Homeschoolers are considered for scholarships "of course!" These are based on what the student has learned, community involvement and a number of other things. An essay may be required as part of the application for a scholarship.

Mount Saint Vincent University (Halifax, N.S.)

457-6788 Admissions Office

Write the GED and send the results with a regular application. Passing that, the student would meet with a recruitment officer. Each student is dealt with on an individual basis.

Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (Halifax, N.S.)

422-7381 Terry Bailey

Looking for some equivalency to N.S. grade 12, and evaluations of some kind, if available. Whatever documentation is available during the homeschooling period would be valuable. (Keep records and portfolio!) GED and SAT are acceptable and useful. They want to get an idea of the student's strengths. Usually there is no problem with homeschoolers. They're just as good, if not better equipped to take on higher level studies.

Saint Francis Xavier University (Antigonish, N.S.)

863-3300 Janet Stark, Associate Registrar

St. F.X. is looking for whatever documentation the student can provide to demonstrate readiness to enter university level studies. If the curriculum includes a final exam, it would be acceptable evidence, especially if overseen and/or marked by a public school teacher of that subject; i.e. Chemistry exam - Grade 12 Chemistry teacher. The SAT is a very good piece of objective documentation. These offer subject-specific tests, which may be useful if applying to a more prescribed program such as science. St. FX is a small school so they can be flexible. Homeschoolers are not excluded from consideration for scholarships. Generally scholarships go to the top 5% of the class, but will look at documentation available.

P.S. Did I mention it's a good idea to keep records and a portfolio?

Athabasca University

Athabasca University has no requirements for a grade 12 certificate in order to gain admittance. It is also possible for homeschoolers who are not yet 18 years to attend in some instances as well. Knowing this makes it easier to take a more flexible approach to homeschooling than would be possible if a grade 12 certificate was required regardless of the province you live in. Athabasca offers entire degrees by correspondence, and on-line learning. In most cases, Homeschoolers do not need to be on campus to obtain credits or complete course requirements. The following is a quote from a response to an inquiry made to Athabasca regarding homeschoolers:

"Athabasca University currently serves over 23,000 Canadian and international distance education students. We offer over 500 courses and 60 programs at the masters, degree, diploma and certificate level. The majority of our students study at home, at work via individual study or on-line."As an open University our admission requirements for undergraduate students are that students must be at least 18 years of age and:(1) Resident in Canada, or(2) Canadian citizens temporarily living outside of Canada, or(3) A foreign national/international student residing in Canada, the United States of America or Mexico.

Thus, there are no high school requirements for admission to Athabasca University. Persons under 18 years of age may be admitted and enrolled in a program of study provided they have obtained a high school matriculation diploma. Those under 18 years of age who do not have a high school matriculation diploma may be admitted to the University by petitioning

the Registrar for special consideration, provided the application for admission is accompanied by a letter of support from the person's high school principal or designate. In the case of homeschooled students, we would accept a letter from the parent or guardian in lieu of the principle.

For more information about Athabasca University, please contact:

Telephone: 1-800-788-9041 (Toll free Canada & US)

Telephone 1 (780) 675 - 6100

Website <http://www.askau.ca>

The basic entrance requirements for homeschooled students are the same as for all other students. Homeschooled students can meet the requirements by:

1) attending a local high school for Grade 12 or the final year of schooling; 2) taking the Grade 12 academic entrance subjects through a correspondence program acceptable to the University; or 3) presenting Advanced Placement test scores on an official transcript for the entrance subjects.

University of Buffalo

Letter sent out to homeschooled applicants:

Dear "salutation":

Your application has been received for admission to the University at Buffalo for the fall 2001 semester. The information in your application indicates that you are a home-schooled student. The following supportive material is required of all home-schooled applicants:

1. A transcript outlining the subjects studied and results of your high school program through the end of grade eleven;
2. The results from an administration of the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT1) or the American college Testing Program (ACT);
3. An essay from you describing your educational program, special projects, extracurricular activities, and special accomplishments;
4. Two letters of recommendation: one from the parent or other person providing your education, and one from a person involved with your other activities (e.g. clubs, internships, service).

Once your file is complete, the Admissions Committee will review your application. If you have any question concerning UB or application procedures, please don't hesitate to call your advisors in the Office of Admissions at (716) 645-6900.

Sincerely,

Regina S. Toomey

Assistant Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education

Director of Admissions

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)

MIT does not have any requirement for HS diploma. They do, however rely heavily (but not exclusively) on standardized testing. For example, the vast majority of MIT students will have at least 700 on their math SAT, however, MIT does not have a cutoff score below which they will categorically deny admission. MIT is looking for sufficient academic skill that a student will be able to handle the workload. (They have an extremely low 1st year attrition rate - 2%) Beyond that, non-academic achievements are what will distinguish the successful applicants, with an emphasis on personal development, community involvement and leadership skills in a wide variety of areas (could be extra-curricular in school, employment, hobbies, sports, religious, cultural, volunteer, service groups etc). [extracted from an MIT FAQ for high school students]

Q: Does it matter whether an applicant attends a public or private secondary school?

A: We do not favor one type of school over another. We are looking for well-prepared students. Approximately 21 percent of our freshman applicants come from private schools, 71 percent from public schools, 7 percent are from international schools, and 1 percent are home schooled. A similar ratio is reflected in the admitted class.

Q: What is the recommended high school preparation?

A: A recommended high school program is as follows: - One year of high school physics - One year of high school chemistry - One year of high school biology - Math through calculus - A foreign language - Four years of English - Two years of history and/or social sciences. If you do not match this in every detail, you may still apply

Q: May I apply to MIT for admission after my junior year of high school?

A: Yes. A high school diploma is not necessary for admission to MIT. But we warn junior year applicants that they may have academic programs that are less competitive in our applicant group simply because they have not had as much time to take as many academic courses. In addition, they have one less year of achievement outside the classroom and may lack the maturity we see in most applicants.

Q: If I am enrolled concurrently in a high school and a college or university, may I still apply to MIT as a freshman?

A: In most cases, yes. But if you are enrolled at a college or university full time and if you have lived in college or university housing, you might be considered a transfer applicant. Be sure to check with the Admissions Office if you have any questions.

Stanford University

(excerpted from the university web site)

Home Schooling and the admission evaluation process. . . During the last few years we have seen a steady increase in applications from families who are home schooling their children. Although they are still a small minority in our applicant pool, such students are no longer a rarity; several are admitted and enroll at Stanford each year. We try to be scrupulously fair in evaluating these applicants, and make sure that they are not at a disadvantage in the admission process. At the same time, these applicants present us with some special

challenges; what follows suggests how home-schooled students might best address the issues when they apply.

We do not have a required curriculum or set of courses for applicants to Stanford. We make general recommendations for the program in grades 9-12

<http://www.stanford.edu/group/uga/criteria/program_09-12.html> to all applicants. It will be to the home-schooled applicant's advantage if the home curriculum approximates or exceeds these recommendations, but they are guidelines, not requirements. Primarily, we want students to demonstrate that they have successfully undertaken a serious, rigorous course of study. They should provide a detailed description of their curriculum when they apply, but it is not necessary to follow a prescribed or approved home-schooling program. The central issue for us is the manner in which the student has gone about the learning process, not how many hurdles he or she has jumped.

An obvious difficulty home-schooled students face in the admission process is the lack of a conventional high school transcript. There is actually not a great deal of difference between someone with no formal grades or transcript and someone with excellent grades from a small, rural high school from which we have seen no other applicants. Grades are more meaningful when they help us distinguish between students in large high schools where there are known standards. Home schooling records lack a comparative context, of course. In a less competitive world, where we could take all qualified students, such comparisons would be unnecessary, but we can offer admission to fewer than 13% of our large pool of very capable applicants, and it is difficult for an applicant to stand out in such a pool.

We look for a clear sense of intellectual growth and a quest for knowledge in our applicants. What is their level of intellectual vitality? How have they sustained their curiosity? Homeschooled students may have a potential advantage in this aspect of the application, since they have consciously chosen and pursued an independent course of study. In particular, we would like to hear in the written application about how the family chose home schooling, how the learning was organized, what benefits accrued, and what the experience cost in terms of lost opportunities.

Overall, the home-schooled student's writing about his or her educational experience can play an even more central role in the application than it would for a conventional high school student. This kind of self-inquiry may be difficult for some students, because our society tends to discourage reflection about intellectual questions as opposed to vocational goals. Nevertheless, we strongly encourage an effort to analyze the experience, as much for the educational benefit of taking stock of oneself as for making a mark in the admission process. This is doubly important at Stanford because, unlike some independent colleges, we do not use interviews as part of the admission process, either for home-schooled students or anyone else. Our entire evaluation is based on the written application and supporting materials.

With little other quantitative information available, home-schooled students' standardized test scores (SAT <<http://www.collegeboard.org>>, ACT <<http://www.act.org>>) take on more significance than they might for other applicants. Normally, test scores are factored in along with grades, rank in class, and a judgment of the quality of the school and the student's academic program; they are never decisive by themselves. We require the SAT I or the ACT, but only recommend the SAT II subject tests. It is even more important for home-schooled

students to take the subject tests in order to provide some measure of relative achievement.

Recommendations raise other issues. Typically, we require three recommendations: two from teachers of the student's choice and one from a guidance counselor or other school official. The parents of a home-schooled applicant can write one recommendation in place of all three. While this recommendation is helpful in conveying in detail the context of the student's educational experience, it also lacks one crucial element: the objectivity brought by a conventional teacher able to compare the child with other students he or she may have taught. We do not expect parents to make such a comparison (all parents are naturally proud of their own children), but we do have to compare these applicants to thousands of others for whom we have an objective view. Teachers and guidance counselors can be biased, too, and this is why we ask for three letters, in the hope that each will independently verify and reinforce the others. If a student is able to take a community college course or two during the high school years or has a tutor outside the family as part of the homeschooling program, those teachers can write additional teacher recommendations and provide some non-parental evaluation. Anything a home-schooled student can do to support the application with standard credentials helps to reduce any lingering uneasiness we might have about admitting a student lacking recent formal educational experience.

Sometimes home-schooled students worry about the difficulty of demonstrating the high level of social involvement normally displayed in extracurricular activities. They usually do not have team sports, student government, a band, a newspaper, or an honor society to provide opportunities for non-academic development. This may be less of an obstacle than one might fear. We regularly see applications from students whose main focus of non-academic activity is outside of the school setting. They may be involved in community service, religious life, drama, sports, local politics, or work, participating with a dedication and energy that we find very attractive and easily comparable to conventional high school activities. We do not care which activities students chose; we just hope that they will make full use of opportunities to contribute to their personal growth and sense of community. Because Stanford is a residential community as well as a university, we anticipate that most students will be involved in extracurricular life here in some way. Students do not need to describe exactly how they expect to participate, but they should demonstrate that they have the energy for and an interest in doing so.

General recommendation for grade 9 - 12:

English: four years, with significant emphasis on writing and literature. The stronger a student's preparation in English, the better the student's chance for success in whatever field of study he or she pursues.

Mathematics: four years, with significant emphasis on fundamental mathematical skills (algebra; trigonometry; plain, solid, and analytic geometry). The strongest possible grounding in math is especially desirable for students interested in scientific and technical fields.

History/Social Studies: three or more years, including a year of American History. Such courses should include the writing of essays.

Science: three or more years of laboratory science. For those with a preliminary academic interest in science or engineering, the strongest possible preparation in science is desirable.

Foreign Language: three or more years of one foreign language is preferable. The study of a foreign language ought to include the development of four basic skills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening comprehension. It is better to have taken one foreign language in depth rather than introductory courses in two different languages.

United States Naval Academy

Homeschooled students make up a small but increasing number of applicants for admission to the United States Naval Academy. There are no additional requirements for homeschoolers, but in light of the fact that it is sometimes more challenging to review non-traditional records, we offer the following guidelines to assist in preparing and competing for an appointment. To be competitive for an Academy appointment, we recommend the homeschool curriculum include the following courses:

Mathematics

Four years of math courses, including a strong foundation in geometry, algebra, and trigonometry. Experience in pre-calculus or calculus is also very valuable, if it does not interfere with the aforementioned courses.

Science

One year of chemistry, with lab if possible.

English

Four years of course work with special attention to the study and practice of effective writing. Surveys of English and American literature are especially helpful as background for future study of literature.

To further enhance your competitiveness for admission, the following courses are also recommended:

Foreign Language

At least two years. Course work should include regular use of the spoken language and encompass elementary syntax and grammar.

Physics

One year, with lab if possible.

History

One full year of U.S. history and, where possible, a full year of European or world history.

IT

Introductory computer and keyboarding courses are recommended because all midshipmen are required to use personal computers in most courses.

Be sure to let us know if your school is recognized by your local school board or the State Board of Education. Homeschooled students must provide a transcript and, as a minimum, the transcript must include the following academic information

- Course/Class title
- Length of course and date completed
- Grade and Grading scale
- Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA)
- Curriculum/Course description
- Text/materials used

Although many homeschoolers are able to qualify academically for admission, many find their overall records relatively weak in the area of extracurricular activities. This is the portion of the application process we use to predict leadership potential. Some states and local districts allow homeschooled students to participate with traditional high school activities. If this is not the case where you live, then you must be creative. Remember that it is better to provide documentation of activities that may be undertaken independently. Following are some suggestions that may be helpful:

Athletic Activities

- Track/Cross Country: run 5K, 10K races
- Basketball: YMCA, AAU, Boys/Girls clubs
- Soccer: Compete in community/club organized matches
- Lacrosse: Compete in community/club organized matches
- Swimming, Tennis, Rowing, Gymnastics: Join a local club and participate in competitions
- Baseball: Play in summer league affiliated with Babe Ruth, Little League, American Legion

Non-Athletic Activities

- Participate in leadership of church youth group
- Junior Achievement
- Boys Scouts/Girl Scouts
- Boys State/Girls State
- Music: Participate in local band, orchestra, or theatrical productions.

Thomas Aquinas College, Santa Paula, California

Admission requirements for homeschooled students

Thomas Aquinas College has a rolling admission policy: as soon as an application is complete, it is considered by the Admissions Committee. An application includes

- essay responses to questions posed on the application form

-three letters of reference, two of which are to be written by recent teachers; a home educated student should submit a letter written by the primary educator as well as at least one other letter written by someone who has known the applicant well in an academic or otherwise "intellectual" area

-results of the SAT I: Reasoning Test or the ACT; the SAT verbal scores of accepted students generally range from 580 to 800 and math scores range from 520 to 800; composite ACT scores generally range from 22 to 36

-records of high school and college-level studies.

When high school studies were done through a formal homeschooling program, the College should be sent an official transcript from the program. If the curriculum was crafted by parents or others, a detailed account of subjects studied, texts used, and books read should accompany an evaluation of the applicant's performance in specific areas. A personal or conference telephone interview may also be required by the Admissions Committee or requested by the applicant. Generally, applicants must provide evidence satisfactory to the College that they have completed a home schooling program which is the equivalent of a college preparatory course.

The breadth of the Thomas Aquinas College application is particularly well-suited to homeschooled students. It allows them to express their strengths and potential for our curriculum, and it enables the Admissions Committee to judge their potential for success and to place them with appropriate tutors, counselors, and classmates. Over the years, our homeschooled students have indeed fared well at Thomas Aquinas College: so well, in fact, that the Admissions Committee looks forward to receiving their applications!

In the 2000-2001 academic year, 35% of our students had been taught at home!

Campbellsville University

Homeschooled Student Admission Policy

To enter Campbellsville University as a degree-seeking freshman, a student will take the following steps:

1. Submit a completed APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION FORM (available from the Office of Admissions) with the \$20.00 application fee. The application fee is not refundable.
2. Arrange for the Office of Admissions to receive an official transcript of all course work completed on a high school level. The curriculum used will need to be listed as well as the texts used for each class. Any laboratory experiences will also need to be documented along with the facilities (name and location) available for the experiences.
3. Submit an official score report from an American College Testing Program (ACT) or Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) examination.
4. When provisionally accepted for admissions, provide a \$50 enrollment deposit to guarantee entry to the University during the desired semester.
5. Arrange for the Office of Admissions to receive official transcripts for any college credits received before entering Campbellsville University.

Alfred University, New York

Alfred requires a detailed home-made transcript, giving the names of each course taken and the texts used, with a short description of each and, if applicable, AP scores. Any extracurricular activities claimed must be documented by providing information on the activity and/or organization and what exactly the student did. Recommendations can come from anybody, and the rest of the application process remains unchanged.

University of New Hampshire

UNH requires a written summary of studies and evaluation of progress therein; "[this is often more elucidating than a letter grade on a standard transcript and provides us with more meaningful insight on the student's preparation for the transition to University courses. We have also found that many home-schooled students are better prepared to make the transition to our classes because they have been working independently for four years (or more) and are used to taking an active approach in their studies." Recommendations should come from someone in the community.

Reed College, Portland, Oregon

This is Reed's official statement:

Thank you for your interest in Reed College. As a home-schooled student, we realize that it may be difficult for you to complete our application according to our guidelines. While you may not be able to submit everything that we ask for, it is in your best interest to send us as much information as possible regarding your academic background and capabilities.

In order to help us best assess your fit for Reed, your application must include the following:

- * A detailed outline of your home-school curriculum, including subject areas studied, texts used, and time spent on each discipline.
- * A comprehensive list of the books and texts you've read over the last four years, including novels, textbooks and other resources.
- * An expository writing sample (in addition to your Personal Statement and Why Reed essay). This does not have to have been graded or used for coursework, but should be of an academic nature.
- * A letter of reference from a tutor, evaluator, or teacher who is not a family member.
- * The Secondary School Report. Parents are often instrumental in the home-schooling process; they should feel free to complete the Secondary School Report, if appropriate.

In order to strengthen your application, we also suggest the following:

- * An interview, either on campus or with a trained Alumni Admission Representative in your area. This interview can be scheduled at any time before the application deadline by calling the Office of Admission to make appropriate arrangements.
- * While we would prefer two academic references, we realize that this may be difficult. A second letter of reference may come from an employer, supervisor or any non-family

member who can address important personal qualities such as responsibility, creativity, discipline and initiative.

* While we do not require the SAT II, we strongly recommend that home-schooled students submit three subject tests, preferably in writing, mathematics and a third test of your choosing.

We hope that these guidelines will serve to help you present yourself in the best light possible. Reed College recognizes that students who have taken a non-traditional approach to schooling are often individuals who have looked closely at issues of motivation, content and challenge and from this inspection and introspection have grown in ways that Reed encourages and values.

Oberlin College, Ohio

This is Oberlin's official statement:

Oberlin College has a rich diversity of students who bring educational experiences from both conventional and alternative schooling, and welcomes applications from home schooled students. When evaluating applications for admission to Oberlin College, the Admissions committee seeks evidence of academic preparation and proficiency in the following areas:

* 4 years of English* 4 years of mathematics* 3 years of the same foreign language* 3 years of laboratory sciences* 3 years of social studies, including history

In order to properly evaluate the academic background of home schooled applicants, Oberlin College requires the following documents in addition to the standard application for admission:

* Academic portfolio - with a detailed syllabus that lists the subjects studied each year, the dates each subject was studied, a description of each course of study, major texts used or literature read, and evidence of science laboratory experiences;

* Test scores--from either the SAT I and three SAT II subject exams, one of which must be English with writing, or the ACT with the SAT II English with writing subject exam;

* Interview - with an admissions counselor on campus, although a telephone interview may be accepted;

* Two recommendations - from non-parent adults, although a parent may submit a teacher recommendation if s/he was the primary instructor. Non-parent adults include a private instructor, coach, clergy, mentor, employer, or sponsor of an extracurricular activity.

* Copy of a recently written academic paper. A copy of a recent scientific laboratory report is also welcomed as an example of an academic paper.

To be considered eligible to receive federal financial aid funds, home schooled students are required to complete one of several standardized tests to comply with federal guidelines. Please contact Oberlin's Office of Financial Aid at 800/693-3173 for further details of valid testing options.

Huntington College, Alabama [sic — this should have read "Indiana"]

[Note: This is an archived webpage, left as-is for historical accuracy. Huntington College has since changed its name to [Huntington University](#).]

In recent years, we've noticed a surge in the number of homeschoolers applying to Huntington College. We welcome homeschooled students! We have found that most homeschoolers do well on the college level. (In fact, the young man who wrote this page was homeschooled, attended Huntington College, and now works in our Admissions Office.)

Homeschoolers do present our Admissions counselors with some special hurdles, though. Here are some quick tips should any of these issues come up during your application process.

First off, Huntington is interested in the way a student has gone through the learning process, not just that they took 345 hours of astrophysics. We don't require a specific set of courses here at Huntington. Rather, we look for evidence that each student has taken a rigorous, college-preparatory course of study. We need to see a detailed description of classes taken, but it doesn't have to come from any prescribed home schooling curriculum.

If you haven't participated in many school-related activities, don't worry. We see applications from well-rounded students who find non-academic activities outside of "school". Involvement in church, youth groups, Campus Life, community service, sports leagues and drama are equivalent (in our eyes) to high school programs.

One obvious hurdle for college-bound homeschoolers is the lack of a traditional high school transcript. At Huntington, this isn't really a problem. Traditional transcripts and grades help us most with students from larger schools.

At the same time, home school "transcripts" come to us without a basis for comparison. In this context, SAT and ACT scores take on added importance. Usually, we factor standardized test scores along with grades and class rankings. These tests are not the deciding factor, but we do require these tests to be taken. They help us evaluate every student's academic preparedness.

In the area of financial aid, the lack of traditional transcripts and class rankings can be a special predicament. We provide 90% of our students with some form of financial aid, but some of our academic scholarships are more selective and this requires us to use some kind of ranking. For our Presidential Scholarships, for example, we usually rely on grades, test scores and class rankings. If you apply for a Presidential Scholarship, help us understand how you stand out from your peers.

Your application essay is especially important. Take some time with this essay. We don't conduct admissions interviews at Huntington. We evaluate your candidacy for admission entirely on the basis of the written application and supporting materials.

Huntington College is an academic leader. US News & World Report ranks HC in the first tier (<http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/college/rankings/midlibs/midliba2.htm>) of Midwest liberal arts colleges. A greater number of HC faculty hold earned doctorates than at any other CCCU (<http://www.cccu.org>) school in Indiana.

November 10, 1999 HUNTINGTON, IN -Huntington College is one of 45 colleges and universities nationally to be honored by the John Templeton Foundation for exemplary faculty and curricular programs aimed at developing students' character.

Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania

This page outlines the admissions policy and practices for home schooled students wishing to apply for freshman admission to Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania. As with any applicant, LHU operates on a rolling admission plan and each student is evaluated on an individual basis.

The following are specific requirements for applying for admission to LHU:

- Completed application and \$25.00 application fee.
- Official SAT I or ACT scores.
- Two or more letters of recommendation (all must be from outside the home).
- Personal interview with a member of the LHU Admissions Staff.
- A transcript of all secondary level course work from a certified home school accreditation agency (samples of completed course work are also recommended).

Or, a GED (General Equivalency Diploma) and samples of all secondary level course work completed

- Official transcripts of any college work completed.

LHU evaluates all students on the successful completion of a minimum requirement of specific academic course work, including:

- three years or more of academic, algebra based Math*.
- three years, or more of academic Science*, with at least 2 lab courses.
- four years of academic English.
- four years of academic Social Sciences.
- SAT I or ACT scores which reflect an aptitude to successfully complete college level work.

* If the student is intending to major in any Math or Science related subjects we require the completion of four years of both subjects on the secondary level.

If you have any questions concerning LHU's Home School Admissions Policy or would like to discuss your home school situation individually please contact the Office of Admissions at 570-893-2027 or by email at admissions@lhup.edu.

Information for Homeschoolers on Attending College or University in Ontario

Homelearners who wish to attend a university or college in Ontario will find information on this page that relates specifically to this province:

- eligibility of home-educated students in determining [funding of universities and colleges](#) by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU)
- criteria for attending college and university as a [mature student](#) in Ontario.

Many universities and colleges in Ontario now have admissions policies for homelearners. You can find them listed on our page of [Canadian universities and colleges that admit homeschoolers](#).

The **[Ontario Federation of Teaching Parents](#)** has been instrumental in bringing the need for such policies to the attention of Ontario's admissions officers, and helping them formulate what those policies might be through a 49-page report on [Developing Homeschool Admission Policies](#). For more information on higher education for homeschoolers, follow the links in our University/College Info menu.

Funding of universities and colleges

OFTP's efforts with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) have resulted in changes to funding policies for Ontario colleges and universities, as of May 2001. Previously, home-educated students were not eligible to be counted for funding purposes. **(Note: this refers to funding given to the institutions, not to any funding for students themselves.)**

In the Archives: [letter from MTCU to OFTP President](#), Albert Lubberts, regarding the funding changes.

MTCU Wording Changes

Excerpt from the August 2001 issue of [Home Rules](#)

(From an email exchange on the [higheredforhomelearners](#) email list and reported by Shelley Welchner)

Last week [*in 2001*] OFTP received a letter from the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) [*update: now the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development*] informing us of a change in the Document that governs educational transfer payments to universities. Ineligible students are now described as:

"an undergraduate level student who is registered in the first year of an undergraduate degree program and, on the applicable count date, has not successfully completed the requirements for the Ontario Secondary School Honour Graduation Diploma (SSHGD) or the

Ontario Secondary School Diploma with six Ontario Academic Credits (OSSD with 6 OACs) or the equivalent....."

The change is in the addition of the phrase "or the equivalent". So, the criteria which would have made home educated students ineligible is no longer there.

Nobody spoke to the Ministry. This was in response to a letter that the project wrote to the Minister. In our upcoming meeting with the Ontario Council of University Admissions (OCUA), one of the issues we will discuss is the question of defining "equivalent".

Note: University funding is tied to the guidelines set out by the MTCU. All of the universities and colleges are audited annually to determine their level of funding, based in part on the number of students admitted who meet MCTU rules. If a student does not meet those criteria, the university does not receive funding for that student. Tuition fees only cover a portion of the actual cost of educating any individual student, and the shortfall is made up by the government, but only for those students who have the credentials which the Ministry deems appropriate.

Attending College or University as a Mature Student

Excerpt from the December 2000 issue of Home Rules

University Admissions

By Bruce Arai

(note: Mr. Arai is a professor at the Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo; he is also a homeschooling parent and a member of OFTP)

The requirements for university entrance change once a person reaches the age of 21 (19 and in some cases 18 for college) in Ontario. If a person will be 21 on or before the day classes start, has been out of school and working full-time for two full years, they can apply for part-time entrance to university without any other requirement. If they complete two full credits (two eight-month courses) with a 70% average or better, they can transfer to full-time status. In other words, people who meet these requirements are admitted as mature students and they are not subject to the usual requirements of those under 21 (i.e., they can get in without an OSSD). I believe these are Ministry of Colleges, Training and Universities (MCTU) rules which are standard across the province. These are the criteria for mature entrance to a general Arts program. Business and Science programs usually have additional requirements like grade 12 calculus, and in some cases specific science requirements as well.

Note: it is recommended that you determine what the admissions policies are for Mature Students for the particular college or university that you are interested in attending. The specific admissions policy for mature students may vary for each college and university from what is indicated above.

External links

[Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development](#) (previously, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities)