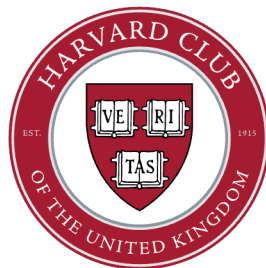


Applying to Harvard College – frequently asked questions

Today's session will help you decide if you would like to apply to Harvard College for your undergraduate degree





This video is provided by the Harvard Club of the UK
and will answer the following FAQs:

1. What subjects can I study at Harvard?
2. Where will I live if I am offered a place?
3. What is the Admissions Committee looking for in prospective students?
4. What are the application components?
5. How do I prepare for entry and when do I apply?
6. How much financial aid is available to UK students?

1. What subjects can I study at Harvard College?



Unlike applying to UK universities through UCAS, you don't apply to Harvard College to study a specific subject. You simply apply to get in.

All applicants apply centrally to Harvard College's Office of Admissions and Financial Aid and typically can explore different subjects before finalising their course of study mid-way through the second year.

You can try out different classes before deciding on your main subject area (concentration)



Harvard concentrations (majors)



INTELLECTUAL VITALITY

AT HARVARD

AT A GLANCE

51 Concentrations
49 Secondary Fields
2900+ Courses Available
100+ First-year Seminars available
7:1 Student/Faculty Ratio
12 Average Class Size



ARTS

Art, Film, & Visual Studies
Music
Theater, Dance, & Media



ENGINEERING

Biomedical Engineering
Electrical Engineering
Engineering Sciences
Environmental Science & Engineering
Mechanical Engineering



HISTORY

History
History & Literature
History & Science
History of Art & Architecture



LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, & RELIGION

Classics
Comparative Literature
Comparative Study of Religion
East Asian Studies
English
Folklore & Mythology
Germanic Languages & Literatures
Linguistics
Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations
Romance Languages & Literatures
Slavic Languages & Literatures
South Asian Studies



LIFE SCIENCES

Chemical & Physical Biology
Human Developmental & Regenerative Biology
Human Biology, Behavior, and Evolution
Integrative Biology
Molecular & Cellular Biology
Neuroscience



MATH & COMPUTATION

Applied Math
Computer Science
Mathematics
Statistics



PHYSICAL SCIENCES

Astrophysics
Chemistry
Chemistry & Physics
Earth & Planetary Sciences
Energy, Climate, & the Environment
Environmental Science & Public Policy
Physics



SOCIAL SCIENCES

African & African American Studies
Anthropology
Economics
Government
Philosophy
Psychology
Social Studies
Sociology
Studies of Women, Gender, & Sexuality



Pre-medical and pre-law programs for undergraduates



Student Voices

Life as a Premed Student at Harvard



<https://college.harvard.edu/student-life/student-stories/life-premed-student-harvard>

Student Voices

"Pre-Law" at Harvard?

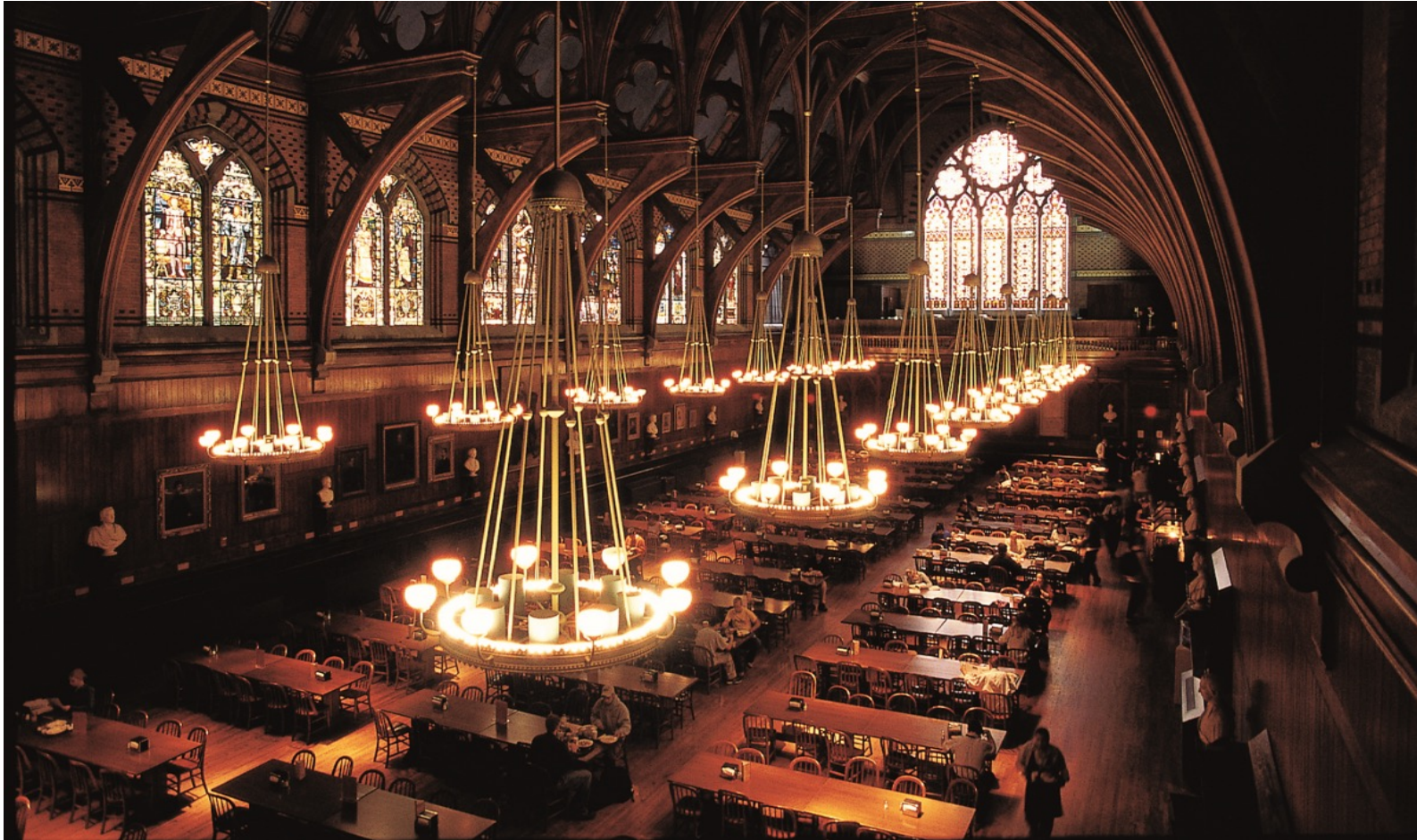


<https://college.harvard.edu/student-life/student-stories/pre-law-harvard>

2. Where will I live if I am offered a place?



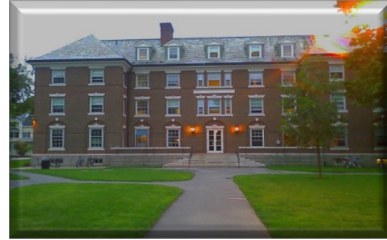
Annenberg Hall, the first year dining hall



The 12 Harvard houses – each house has its own gym, dining hall, library, and staff of advisers



Adams



Cabot



Currier



Dunster



Eliot



Kirkland



Leverett



Lowell



Mather



Pforzheimer



Quincy



Winthrop

Life outside the classroom



- 500+ student groups offering a wide variety of activities
- 42 first division sports teams
- 5 full orchestras, jazz ensembles, a cappella groups, choirs
- 75+ student plays/performances a year
- Daily student newspaper (Harvard Crimson) and dozens of other publications
- 90+ community service groups
- 82 cultural organisations
- 80+ academic and pre-professional groups
- Hundreds of other events on campus and in the wider Boston area



3. What is the Admissions Committee looking for in prospective students?



Harvard Admissions Officers carry out a ‘whole person review’ of each candidate in three broad areas:

1. Academic achievement

Academic considerations (grades, scores, teacher comments) are the most important, but other qualities help differentiate among exceptional candidates (examples in Admission Review diagram).

2. Extracurricular profile

Extracurricular involvement and passions - activities and achievements outside of academic study, in any field.

3. Contributions to community

Family responsibilities, potential contribution to the Harvard community and to the education of those around you, interest in your academic field of choice, initiative, leadership potential.

Admission to Harvard is less of a reward for what a student has done in the past than a belief and an investment in what he or she will do in the future.

4. What are the application components?



- ✓ Common Application (or alternative – check university's website)
- ✓ Optional materials (music, dance, drama, art portfolios, publications)
- ✓ Student essay (part of the application form)
- ✓ Standardised tests: either SAT or ACT (now compulsory at Harvard, but still optional at many other US colleges)
- ✓ School report/teacher recommendations
- ✓ Informal alumni interview in the UK. Can be in person or remotely by Zoom, WhatsApp or phone – but note that many applications are deemed complete without the need for an interview.

Want to apply to Harvard? Then subscribe to our free e-newsletter!



**HARVARD COLLEGE**
Information for UK Applicants
Provided by Harvard Club of the United Kingdom



156TH ISSUE, AUGUST 2026

In this issue

Applying to US colleges for entry in 2027? Start your application now!

Our monthly newsletter will tell you what you should be doing at each stage of the application cycle, and is aimed at students in Years 11, 12 and 13.

To sign-up, go to
Harvard UK Admissions:

<https://harvard-ukadmissions.co.uk/>

Then scroll down the home page, and click on the orange 'SIGN UP NOW' button:

Are you interested in applying to American universities?

If you are thinking of applying to American universities for undergraduate study in the next two years, sign up for our helpful e-newsletter which will guide you through each stage of the application process, and will arrive in your email box around the middle of each month. The last 12 months' newsletters are available under "Applying from the UK."

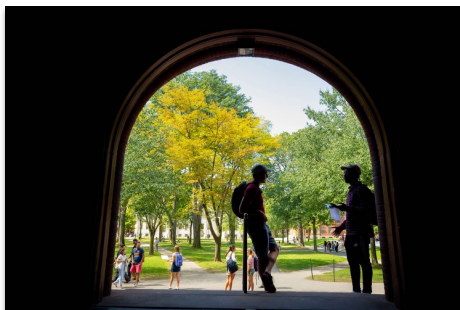
SIGN UP NOW

5. How do I prepare and when do I apply?



School Year	Task List
Years 10 & 11	- Work hard to ensure you get excellent grades for your GCSEs - Develop your interests and activities outside the classroom
Summer Holiday	Undertake work experience or community service if possible
Year 12	- Research the US college system - establish which colleges provide financial aid for international students and use this to create a shortlist of 5-6 colleges - Check whether the standardised tests (SAT or ACT) are optional or compulsory at your shortlisted colleges and do lots of practice if you decide to take them - Inform your school you will be applying to US colleges, and approach 2 teachers who know you well to write letters of recommendation
Summer Holiday	Complete the Common Application Form ('Common App') including essays
Year 13 (Autumn Term)	- Compile all application materials and chase up your referees - Submit admissions/funding applications (early deadline 1st November; regular deadline 1st January) – receive early admissions decisions mid-December
Year 13 (Spring Term)	- Receive regular admissions decisions by the end of March - Accept/decline any offers by 1st May (admission can usually be deferred if you wish to take a gap year)
Summer holiday	- Apply for your visa as soon as you receive your Form I-20 - Read the pre-departure section of the US/UK Fulbright website
August	Fly to America and begin your undergraduate studies

Two application deadlines: Restrictive Early Action (REA) or Regular Decision (RD)



Applications to Harvard can be made either under the Restrictive Early Action, or the Regular Decision program,
NEITHER OF WHICH ARE BINDING

Restrictive Early Action (REA)

(you may only apply to **one** college
under the REA program)

Apply by 1st November

Receive notification by mid-December

Make final choice by 1st May

Regular Decision (RD)

(you may apply to as many colleges as you like
under the RD program)

Apply by 1st January

Receive notification by the end of March

Make final choice by 1st May

6. How much financial aid is available to UK students?



Harvard and some other colleges are both 'need blind' for admissions and provide the 'full demonstrated need' of all admitted students, both domestic and international.

Guiding philosophy: Harvard admits students irrespective of their ability to pay and then offers financial assistance based on family income.

Harvard's undergraduate financial aid budget last year (2025/26) was \$275 million.

Families with incomes under \$100,000 (or £ equivalent) typically pay nothing. All billed expenses – including tuition, food, housing, health insurance and travel costs – are covered. In addition, each student receives a \$2,000 start-up grant in their first year, and a further \$2,000 grant in their third year to support the transition to work or further education beyond Harvard.

Families with incomes under \$200,000 (or £ equivalent) typically will receive free tuition and additional financial aid to cover billed expenses, depending on their financial circumstances.

All financial aid is in the form of grants, not loans, so you don't have to pay them back and it is possible to graduate with little or no debt.





- All US colleges must have, by law, a net price calculator or similar tool on their websites.
- Applicants and their families can compute the approximate net price they will be expected to pay.
- Research financial aid early on: ensure that the aid is available for *international* applicants, as well as for US citizens.

The screenshot shows the Harvard College Net Price Calculator interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for "About", "Admissions", "Financial Aid", "Academics", and "Student Life". Below this, the main heading "Net Price Calculator" is displayed. A subheading states: "To estimate how much you and your family will need to contribute for one year at Harvard, we're going to take you through the following steps:". A list of steps is provided: "1. Family Information", "2. Income Information", "3. Asset Information", and "Net Price Estimate". Each step has an "Edit" link. Below the steps, there are links for "Frequently Asked Questions" and "What You Need". On the right side, a section titled "Before You Start" contains a disclaimer: "Remember, this is not an application for financial aid. The calculator is simply a tool to estimate how much your family will need to contribute for one year at Harvard. You will be asked to provide information about your family and their finances. We do not save this information; it is only used within the calculator. All students, regardless of citizenship or nationality, are eligible to apply for financial aid, but this calculator is based on an average cost of living and taxes paid in the United States, and may not provide accurate results for those whose cost of living or taxes differ." Below this, it states: "This calculator provides a good estimate, but it is not a guarantee of financial aid." and provides a link: "También se puede usar la calculadora en español." At the bottom, a section titled "1/4 Family Information" contains three input fields: "Primary residence", "The number of people in your family", and "The number of children in college". Each field has a dropdown arrow and a "Required" label.

The numbers – admissions and financial aid statistics for the Class of 2029



Here are some brief statistics for the Harvard Class of 2029, who began their undergraduate studies in August 2025:

Admissions

47,893 applicants
2,003 admitted students
16% international students
20% first generation students (the first in their family to go to university)



Financial Aid

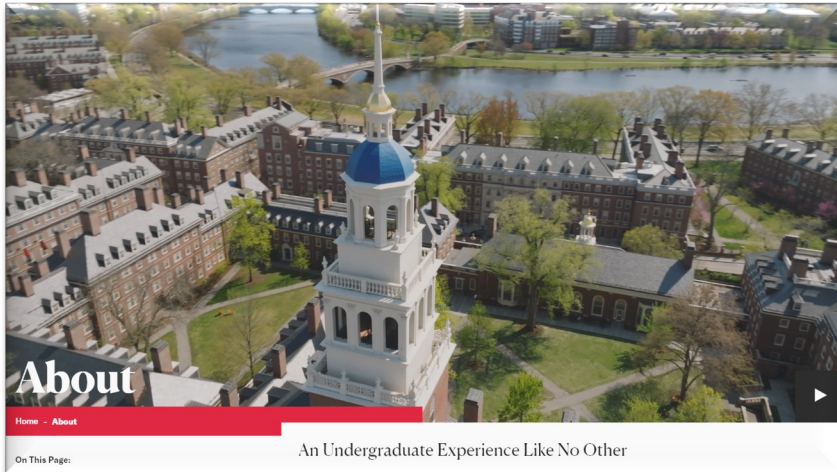
26% attending for free (all billed expenses paid)
45% receiving free tuition
71% receiving need-based financial aid



The two main websites you need if applying to Harvard



Harvard College Admissions & Financial Aid



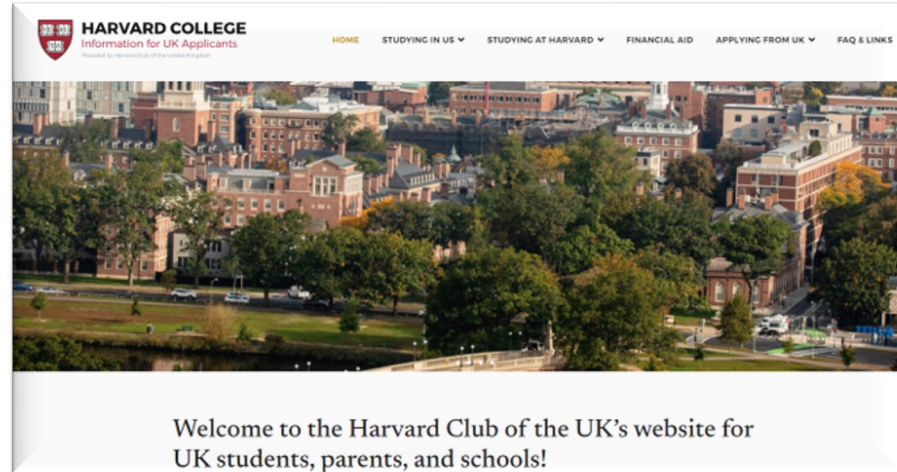
<https://college.harvard.edu/about>

<https://college.harvard.edu/financial-aid/net-price-calculator>

https://www.instagram.com/harvard_admissions/

<https://x.com/applytoharvard>

Harvard UK Admissions Information for UK applicants

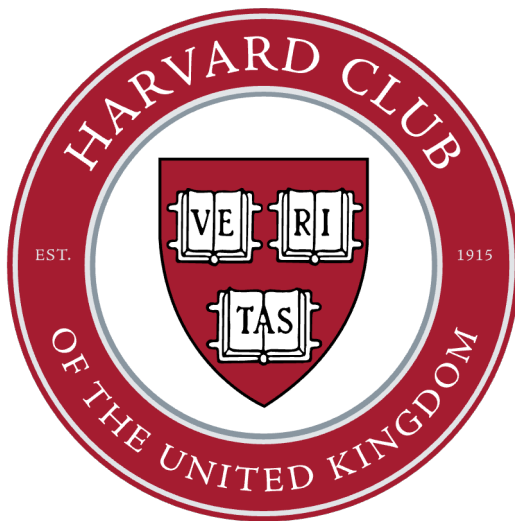


<https://harvard-ukadmissions.co.uk/>

Additional general information



- Information about undergraduate study in the USA:
<https://fulbright.org.uk/educationusa-advice/undergraduate-study-in-the-usa/>
- Information and registration for the SATs:
<https://satsuite.collegeboard.org/sat/registration>
- Information and registration for the ACTs:
<https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/registration.html>
- Information on the Common Application Form:
<https://www.commonapp.org/>
- Search engines for US colleges:
<https://www.petersons.com/college-search.aspx>
<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search/filters>



Questions?
schools@hcuk.org