



Section 3



The application process



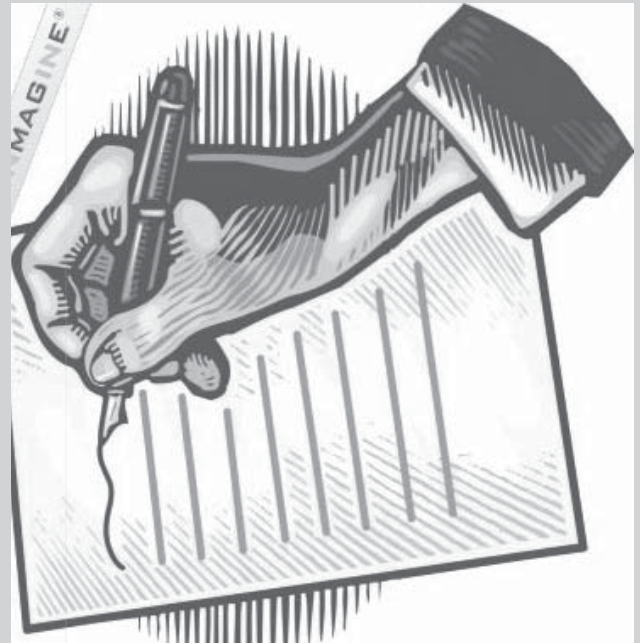
3.1 University application

Think about

*Have you applied to university before?
What is the application process of the university
you would like to apply to?*

*Once you have decided which course you
would like to study and which universities you
would like to apply to, you need to submit your
application. It is important that you prepare
your application thoroughly, and submit it
before the university's deadline.*

*You need to remember that there may be
more people applying for the university course
than there are places available. The university
will want to take the best applicants. They
will reach their decision of who is the best
applicant based on the information given on the
application forms. Therefore, you need to take
time to fill in the application form carefully and
thoroughly and show yourself to be a good candidate
for the course.*



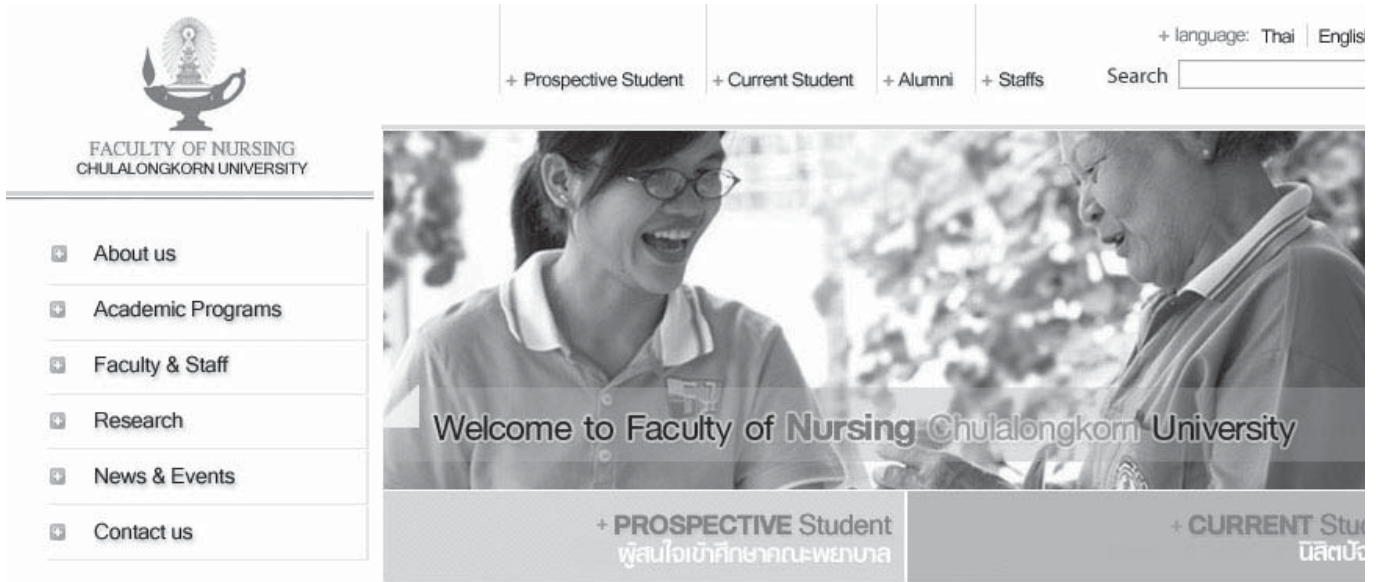
What are universities looking for when they read your application?

- Universities will want to be sure that you have the academic ability to successfully study the course. They can tell this from your qualifications and grades.
- They may also consider what you can contribute to the course, which might be in the form of experience you have gained working in your chosen field.
- If it is an international program they will also want to be sure you have the English ability to cope with the course. Remember, if you need to sit for an equivalence or English exam you probably need to do this in advance of submitting your application.

Research Practice 1

Go to the application page of the College of Public Health Sciences on the Chulalongkorn University website. Find the answers to the following questions:

1. What is the admission deadline for a Master in Public Health?
2. What practical experience is required to be eligible to study a Master in Public Health?
3. What are the submission requirements of applicants' reference letters?
4. What other documents need to be submitted with the application?
5. What is the application fee for a non-Thai citizen?
6. What are the two ways to submit an application form?



Research Practice 2

In Section Two you found the website of a university you are interested in and researched to find out the entry requirements and cost of the course. Find this website again and look up the following information on the application process.

1. Find out the documents that you must submit when you make your application.
2. Find out the deadline for applying.
3. Find out anything else you need to know about the application process.

Check your understanding

Below are the different steps for applying to university, but they are in the wrong order.

Rewrite the sentences in the correct order in the space below.

- *Submit the application with application fee*
- *Photocopy the required documentation*
- *Wait for confirmation that you have been accepted on the course*
- *Decide on a university and a major, and find out the entry requirements*
- *Check with the university to see if they have received your application*
- *Find out the application dates and process*
- *Fill in the application form*
- *Download the application form*

3.2 Scholarship applications

Think about

How much does it cost to study at university?

Do you have enough money to study?

What do you need to do to apply for a scholarship?

A scholarship is a sum of money paid to a student to help the student pay for the cost of studying. Usually scholarships are given to people who do not have enough money to pay for their education themselves.

Some scholarships are full scholarships, which means all the expenses are covered. Other scholarships are partial which means only part is covered and the student has to find another way to pay for the rest

Applying for scholarships is very competitive. A lot of people will be applying for a limited number of scholarships. So only the very best candidates will be successful. Therefore, you need to take time to complete your scholarship application thoroughly.

Most scholarships are provided not just to benefit the student, but also to benefit Myanmar. Scholarship programs want to be as effective as possible. They want to support students who will complete their education and who have a commitment to return and work towards the development of Myanmar after graduation. Therefore, it helps your application if you have an idea of the type of work you would like to do in the future and how this will help your country. In addition to this, scholarship programs look for academic ability and a commitment to study.

Remember, it is much cheaper to study in Asia; because of this, there are more scholarships available in Asia – it is much harder to get a scholarship to study in a western country.

Check your understanding

Read the sentences below. Decide if they are true or false.

1. A scholarship is a sum of money to help me pay for my education.
2. It is very easy to get a scholarship.
3. A scholarship will include money for me to buy myself a TV and computer.
4. I will have to budget my money from my scholarship carefully.
5. The scholarship program will want to see my exam grades and a report of my study.
6. If I run out of money the scholarship program will give me some more.
7. If I have a scholarship I have a responsibility to study hard and complete my course.

There are a number of programs that provide scholarships for students from Myanmar. Below are three of the scholarship options available. There is a more comprehensive list in the appendix. Most scholarships have the requirement that the recipient plans to return to Myanmar and work towards the development and reconciliation of the country on graduation.

Supplementary Grants Program Asia

The Supplementary Grants Program Asia offers scholarships to students who are willing and likely to return to Myanmar to work toward the democratic and economic rebirth of the country.

Scholarships are offered to students enrolled to study at Bachelors, Masters, MPhil or PhD level in any country, though primarily in Asia.

Students can apply for study in any subject in Asia, but eligible subjects are limited in Western countries.

Over 100 scholarships are given to students from Myanmar each year. Grants are usually less than US\$6,000. Students need to reapply annually.

Only partial scholarships are offered so the student must also find funds from another source (see 'matching funds' below).

Prospect Burma

Prospect Burma's mission is to invest in the democratic future of Myanmar through its young people. They educate those who will spread their knowledge and skills back to Myanmar for its future development.

Prospect Burma helps students who have a good academic record, financial need, and eventually intend to return to Myanmar to help the democratic rebuilding of the country.

Scholarships are offered to students enrolled to study at Bachelors, Masters, MPhil or PhD level in any country, though primarily in Asia.

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Over 100 scholarships are given to students from Myanmar each year. Grants are usually less than US\$6,000. Students need to reapply annually.

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Child's Dream and diversethics Foundation

Child's Dream supports more than 40 projects in the Mekong sub-region. Their projects range from nursery and primary schools to high schools and junior colleges. Highly educated youths will become future leaders, will promote tolerance and diversity, and will contribute to a peaceful life in their communities.

Child's Dream and diversethics offer 100% scholarships to students enrolled to study at Bachelors and Masters, level in Thailand. Any subject is eligible.

Scholarships offered change annually depending on donor criteria and funding.

Matching funds

? What do you think?

Some scholarships only provide part of the total amount of money you need to study at university. They require that you have a matching fund to cover the rest of the costs. If the student does not have a matching fund they are not eligible to apply.

List four ways you can think of to pay for the rest of the costs

One other way is a fee waiver. A fee waiver is a discount on university fees. Some universities offer fee waivers to students from Myanmar. Fee waivers are usually linked to scholarship programs, so if you do not have a scholarship you may not be eligible for a fee waiver. More information on fee waivers can be found on the Myanmar Study Abroad website.

Courses and University preferences

? What do you think?

Scholarship organisations often want to support students who are studying degrees that will be beneficial for the development of Myanmar.

List five majors you think are most important for the future development of Myanmar.

Scholarship programs have their own aims and criteria when selecting students. Always read the information from the programs carefully to be sure you meet the criteria for the scholarship.

Similarly, many programs prefer to support students studying in Asian universities. This is because the cost of studying in an Asian university is far lower than in a western university. If scholarship programs support students studying in Asia they are able to provide scholarships to a greater number of students than they would if they support students studying in the West.

When you are finding scholarship programs to apply to you need to make sure it is possible to get a scholarship for your chosen major before going ahead with your application.

Tips for completing a scholarship application:

- Each scholarship program will have a slightly different application process and different application deadlines. You need to research these carefully before making your application.
- As with your university application you need to fill in the scholarship application carefully and thoroughly. Read all the instructions carefully.
- Check deadlines. Make sure you know when to submit the form before, and whether this date is a **mailing deadline** or **received deadline**.
- Make sure you, your chosen course and chosen university, are eligible for the scholarship.
- Be sure you return the form to the correct address. Some scholarship programs have different mailing addresses depending on where applicants live or plan to study.
- Make sure you include copies of all the relevant documentation. If there is any documentation you don't have available include a letter explaining this in your application, and send the documentation as soon as possible

- Produce an accurate budget of the costs you need covered. Scholarship applications will require you to submit a breakdown of your costs. This may be difficult for you to complete since you won't know the costs of living in another country. Don't guess; this will harm your application. You can contact the *Student Support Services* who can offer you advice on this.
- You may be required to write essays or a biography to submit with your application. Read the essay questions carefully, and make sure you write about the topics given.
- Keep a copy of your application for yourself. You may need to refer to it later.

3.3 How universities and scholarship programs reach their decisions

Universities and scholarship programs receive applications from a lot of students. They receive more applications than they have places or scholarships on offer. From the information on the application forms they have to decide who are the best students to select.

Each university and scholarship program will have their own criteria for selecting students. But they all have the same overall goal – to select students who are going to successfully complete their degrees.

Below are some of the criteria universities and scholarship programs will consider when selecting students, plus what you can show to help your application:

- Academic ability – Do you have the academic ability to be able to successfully complete the level of course you have chosen?

Show: Graduation certificates and transcripts that meet the entry requirements of the course you have chosen, or the certificate of an equivalence exam (see 3.14)

- English ability – Do you have the English ability to understand the lecturers and course material?

Show: A qualification in a recognised course taught in English, a TOEFL or IELTS score (see 3.15)

- An interest in the chosen major – Do you have enough interest in your chosen major to spend three or four years of your life studying it?

Show: Reasons why you want to study this major, written in your biography and essays.

- Commitment and motivation – Do you have the commitment and motivation to work hard and successfully complete your degree?

Show: Using your application form, biography and essays – forms and essays that are completed carefully and thoroughly will create a positive impression of you, as will information about work experience, community involvement and relevant hobbies.

- A genuine desire to study – Do you really want to study?

Show: The reasons why you want to further your education.



In addition, scholarship programs will look for:

- Financial need – Do you genuinely need a scholarship or are you able to pay for your university education without one?

Show: Your financial situation clearly and honestly.

- Intention to work for the betterment of Myanmar after graduation – Will you return to your community after completing your degree and work to develop Myanmar?

Show: What you plan to do when you have completed your degree.

- The relevance of your chosen major to development and democratisation in Myanmar – How will your chosen major benefit Myanmar in the future?

Scholarship application panels will also consider:

- The amount requested – Expensive courses are less likely to receive scholarships
- The quality of the course – Scholarship programs want to support students studying high quality courses

3.4 Writing biographies

Think about

If you had to write a biography of your life, what would you write?

Why would a scholarship organisation want to read your biography?

Many scholarship applications will require you to write a biography. A biography is a piece of writing that summarises your life so far. Biographies can be whole books, but in this case no selection panel would have time to read a book of your life! Your biography should only be one or two pages long.

A biography is an important part of your scholarship application, so you must take time to write it clearly and include all the relevant information. No-one is allowed to write your biography for you, but you can ask someone to read it and give you feedback.

There are many things you need to consider when you write your biography:

1. Consider your audience

- Who will be looking at your biography?
- What do they know about Myanmar's situation?
- What are the aims of their organisation?
- What is important to them?

2. Consider the purpose of your audience

- Why are they reading your biography?
- What do you hope they will do after reading your information?
- Who will they compare you with?
- What will they be looking for when they read your biography?

3. Consider the other applicants

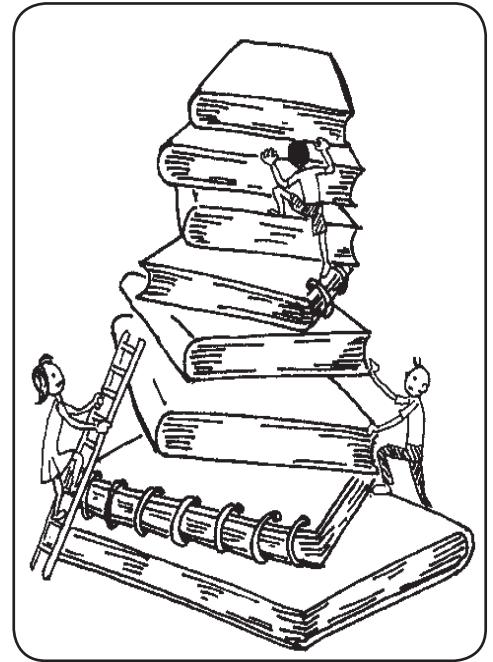
- How can you make your biography better than the biographies of other people?
- What information would the ideal person have?
- What information would the ideal person NOT have?
- What information should be in your biography?

How to write a biography

You are writing your biography in order to give the reader some information about your life. You also need to convince a university or scholarship program that you are a worthy candidate for their support.

When you write your biography make sure you organise it in a chronological order. The best way would be in time order, starting with your early life.

Be concise and clear. Remember, selection panels have a lot of biographies to read. If your biography is wordy or confusing the panel won't take time to work out what you are trying to say. In addition, your writing is a reflection of your English and academic abilities, and of you as a person.



Think about

What do you think a messy, confused, poorly written biography would suggest to the selection panel about a candidate?

What to include in your biography:

- **Your name**
- **Your birthplace**
- **Your date of birth**
- **Where you were born / where you live now**
- **Your parents**
- **Your current job if you have one**
- **Your education**
- **Major events in your life**
- **Your accomplishments / awards / achievements**
- **Your goals**
- **Your interests / hobbies / spare time activities**
- **Difficulties, hardships faced**
- **Descriptions about the state of life at each stage of your life**
- **What you want to study in the future**
- **Why you want to study this**
- **What you will do in the future**
- **How you will use your education**

Don't put details that are irrelevant to the aim of your biography, such as

- **Descriptions of your house / village etc**
- **A description of all your family members**
- **Background on Myanmar (the biography is about you, not Myanmar)**



Practice

Follow these steps to help you write your own biography:

A. Read the requirements on the application form carefully – Some programs may ask for a biography, others may ask for essays on specific topics. Make sure what you are writing is relevant to the program's requirements. Make sure you follow the guidelines on the length of essays or biographies.

B. Planning – Write down all your ideas on a piece of paper. Don't worry about writing sentences or about grammar and spelling, the aim is that you write down everything you want to say in the biography. Use the checklist above to help you with your ideas.

C. Organising – You now have a page of ideas, written down in the order that they came out of your head. You need to arrange them into chronological order. On another piece of paper rewrite your ideas in the correct order for your biography.

D. Drafting – Now write the first draft of your biography. Remember to use clear sentences and paragraphs.

E. Editing – Read through your biography and correct grammar and spelling mistakes. Do you want to make any changes to the order of the biography? Is there any information you want to add or take out?

F. Second draft – Rewrite your biography correcting the mistakes and making the changes.

G. Second edit – Read through your biography a second time. Look for any mistakes you may have missed the first time. Do you want to make any more changes? You could ask someone else to read your biography and give you suggestions.

H. Final draft – Rewrite your biography again. If possible you should type it on the computer as this makes it much easier for a selection panel to read. If you can't type it then write in clear, neat handwriting.



This might seem like a lot of work to produce one essay, but you want to be sure you produce a piece of writing that will benefit your application as much as possible. It is also good practice for all the essays you will be expected to write at university!

There are two advantages to drafting and writing your biography on a computer.

- It is much quicker to rewrite sentences and make changes on a computer.
- You can use the spell and grammar check on the computer to edit your work.

Note: Take care with spell check – sometimes, if you have spelt a word wrong the computer will suggest a word that is close to the spelling, but not the word you want. Always make sure the word the computer suggests is the word you want to use.



Check your understanding

Match the halves of the sentences. One has been done for you.

The selection panel will read your biography

so don't make your biography too long.

You should plan your biography carefully

you don't have the ability or motivation for university study.

Don't write background information on Myanmar

to help them decide whether to give you a scholarship.

The scholarship panel will have many biographies to read

to make sure it is clear and well organised.

A badly written biography will suggest

unless you are asked to include this.

3.5 Completing application forms

Think about

What do you need to do to fill out an application form successfully?

The way you complete your application form is also very important to your application. Your application form contains all the information about you that the university or scholarship program will want to know.

Make sure you spell everything, including names of places, addresses and courses correctly. Your application form will reflect your English ability.

What do you think?

Imagine you are a professor selecting students for a university course and you receive a form that is difficult to read because of untidy handwriting, plus some of the information is not complete or is incorrect.

What would you think about the person who sent this form?
Would you offer the applicant a place on the course?

Try to avoid using liquid paper or having lots of crossings out on your application form. It is advisable to fill in one copy of the form as practice, and then complete a second form to submit.

Check your understanding

Imagine you are on a panel selecting students for a university course. You are reading through a big pile of applications.

What of the following would you expect to see or not see in the applications?
Put a tick \checkmark or a cross X after each below:

- A fully completed form _____
- Messy hand writing _____
- Lots of crossings out _____
- A clear education history _____
- Liquid paper _____
- Details of the courses applied / accepted to _____
- Questions filled in incorrectly _____
- Good grammar and spelling _____
- Poor use of English _____
- Work history in chronological order _____



Practice

Practice filling in this sample application form below:

Application Form		
Last name: _____	First name: _____	Other names: _____
Date of birth: _____		Ethnic group: _____
Father's Name: _____	Mother's name: _____	
Gender: _____ male _____ female		
Present address:		
Number and street _____		
Town /city /village _____		State _____
Postal code _____	Country _____	
Tel number _____	Email _____	
Academic information		
I have applied to:		
Course _____		
University _____		
Have you already been accepted to this university? _____ yes _____ no		
Is the course _____ part time _____ full time		
_____ undergraduate _____ post graduate		
University address:		

Month and year you will begin your study _____		

Educational background

Please give all your education from high school. Give the most recent first.

Institution

Qualification

Grade

1.

2.

3.

Work history

Please list your previous employment. Give the most recent first.

Employer

Type of work

From – to

1.

2.

3.

Note – This is just a sample form. You will find most application forms are much longer and more detailed.

Some more tips for completing application forms:

- Use black ink – it photocopied better
- Keep a copy of the form – you can refer to in the future
- Find a quiet place to fill in the form
- Research who you are filling in the form for (you need to make sure the information you put is relevant to what you are applying for)
- If a section provides a lot of space, try to fill as much as possible – they are expecting long answers there
- Include a covering letter
- Keep the form flat or folded once – it does not look good to submit a form that has many folds or is creased

3.6 Essays and application forms – what to say and what not to say

Think about

What are good things to write in a scholarship essay or an application form?

What should you not write?

Most university and scholarship applications require you to write essays on which major you want to study, why you want to study that major, and what you intend to do in the future.

It is important that you show that you genuinely want to study the major you have chosen and that you understand what the major involves and how you can use it in the future.

To help you write a convincing essay you should:

- Research the program (university and course) you are applying for and have reasons why you are interested in this field of study and why this particular program is your first preference. Do you have a clear idea of the content of the program?
- Explain what in your background has led you to want to do this. What life experiences have made you interested in this major?
- Have clear realistic goals for what you want to do in the future. These goals need to be:
 - Achievable
 - Specific
 - Related to your field of study
- Try to make your essay stand out from the others. Selection panels will read many applications. What should you write to convince them to offer a place to you?
- Go through the drafting and editing process describe in '3.4 - Writing Biographies'.



DO NOT SAY:

“I want to study so that I can become an educated person”

Many students write this statement on their application forms, but it will not help their application. It is too vague. It suggests that you have not really thought about why or what you want to study, or what you will do in the future.

? What do you think?

Read the goals below. Which goals do you think will impress a selection panel? Which goals will not impress the panel? What do you think is wrong with these goals?

1. I want to return to my village and work as a midwife in the clinic there.
2. I want to be a good leader and help my people.
3. I am going to change the education system in Myanmar and set up many schools.
4. I would like to work to promote understanding between the different ethnic groups in Myanmar.
5. With an engineering degree I can work toward improving the sanitation in my town.
6. After completing an agriculture degree I will tell the farmers how they must improve their crop yield.
7. Studying education will help me to be an effective high school teacher when I return to my community.

8. If I get the opportunity to study business I will be able to make lots of money, then I can help my people.
9. The environment is very important. I want to work to protect it by raising people's awareness of the damage being done to the environment in Myanmar.
10. When I am an educated person I will share my knowledge.



Practice

Now try to write two goals of your own:

3.7 Submitting applications

Think about

If you were selecting students for a university course and some applications arrived late or incomplete, what would you think of these applicants?

After you have completed your application form and collected the required documentation (see below) you need to submit your application. You need to allow several days for postage to be sure your application arrives at the university or scholarship program before their deadline.

What to submit

Read the application instructions carefully. Find out all the documents you need to submit with your application. Check whether these documents need to be originals, or whether you can send copies.

Documents required could include:

High school / university certificates

Transcripts showing academic records and grades

Recommendations letters (Note – you may be asked to submit letters or just to give the names and addresses of referees.)

Passport photos – check the required size of the photos

Scholarship programs may also require:

Proof of enrolment on the course you plan to study

A copy of a letter offering another grant if you have been offered one

A copy of the personal details page of your passport

Application forms often include a checklist of the documents required. Before sending your application go through this checklist and tick off the documents you are submitting.

It is important you send all the required documentation. Your application will not be considered without it. If there is any documentation you don't have available include a letter explaining this in your application, and send the documentation as soon as possible

Translation of documents

It is likely that all the documents you submit will need to be in English. You need to get any documents written in Burmese translated into English.

Application fees

Universities will also require an application fee when you submit your application. The fees will vary between universities and may be higher for international students. Fees could be from US\$25 to US\$100.

Note: The University Application Assistance Scheme can provide small grants to help with the cost of university applications. Refer to 3.10, or to the Myanmar Study Abroad website.

Difficulty paying from Myanmar

Most universities will request the payment be made by a bank transfer or money order. It is often difficult to make these payments from Myanmar and it is never safe to send money in the post. The Student Support Services can help you make this payment, by making the payment for you, then arranging to collect the fee in Myanmar.

Follow up

Universities will not contact you to let you know your application has arrived. It is always good to follow up with the university and confirm they have your application, and that you have sent all the required documents. Allow time for your application to arrive, then phone or email the department.

Following up will reflect positively on you too. It will tell the university that you really want to study on the course.



3.8 Names and birth dates

Think about

Do you use more than one name? Do you have an official name and a nickname? Do you have the same name, spelling, and date of birth on all your official documents?

It is important that you consider the way names and dates of birth are written internationally, as there are many differences between the way they are written in other countries and in Myanmar. These differences could result in your forms being incorrectly completed and can result in you not being accepted to university or not getting a scholarship.

You need to consider the information below when you fill in your name not only on university and scholarship application forms, but also when you apply for your passport, visas and flight tickets.

Names

Structure:

The structure of Burmese names is different than in other countries. Internationally, most countries have a two or three part name:

First/Given part of the name

Middle/Given part of the name

Family/Surname/Last part of the name

A person's name is read and usually written in that order: first part, middle part, last part. Many application forms expect Burmese names to be divided in the same way and will often ask for your first/family names.

Prefixes are not your name:

Prefixes are titles that men and women use. For example, a woman may use a prefix such as 'Mrs.', 'Miss', or 'Ms'. These prefixes simply categorize the person as a woman. A man may use the prefix 'Mr'.

In Myanmar, there are many prefixes for women, men, young, old, both in Burmese and other ethnic languages. Some examples include: 'Maung', 'Min', 'Sai', 'Mi', 'Naw', 'Saw', etc. These Myanmar prefixes are not known by anyone outside Myanmar. If you write the prefix as your first name, people will think this is your name and probably speak to you by saying, 'Hello Maung!' or 'Hello Daw!'.

Generally, you should not include a Myanmar/ethnic prefix as part of your name.

Convert your name:

You can easily convert your name into the foreign format by putting the first non-prefix part of your name as the 'first name', the second word in your name as the 'middle name' and the final word of your name as your 'last name'. If you only have two parts to your name you would put the first part as the 'first name' and the second part as the 'last name'; you will not have a middle name. If you have more than three parts, you will put them in the same order, but should make one section have two words.

One Name Forever:

In Myanmar it is common to have many different names or nicknames. Maybe you have one document with one name written, and another document with a totally different name. Maybe you changed your name for some reason.

In countries outside of Myanmar, people do not change their names. They usually have only one name with three parts which do not change ever in their life. That name is the same on all their documents, certificates, registrations, and ID cards and passports.

You can only have one 'official' name, that is, you can only use one name with two or three parts. The parts must always be the same and have the same spelling. You can have as many 'unofficial' nicknames as you want! A nickname is something that your friends call you, but that you do not ever write on any documents. You should always use your 'official' name with the same two or three parts on all your documents.

Spelling cannot change:

Outside of Myanmar, even different spellings for the same name mean that it is not the same person. If the name is meant to be the same name, but an official spelled it incorrectly, to someone outside Myanmar, it is a different person.

Therefore, it is essential you learn to correctly spell your name in English and never ever change it. If you are applying for a passport make sure the official spells your name in the correct way in English

Names may have strange meanings in a different language:

Be aware that your name or the sound of your name when spoken may have a different meaning in another language. You should ask your friends who can speak English or a teacher if your name has any meanings. If so, you should use a nickname when you introduce yourself so that people don't laugh at you and make you feel embarrassed. Remember, your official name must be used on all documents, not your nickname.

Birth Dates

Order of day, month, and year

The order of your birth date is very important. Different countries use different formats, for example in South Korea the year is first, the month second, and the day is written third. In the United Kingdom the day is first, the month is second, and the year is third. In the United States the month is first, the day is second, and the year is third.

If you need to fill in a date on a form the following might be written to tell you how to write the date, for example:

dd/mm/yy	or	dd/mm/yyyy	UK
mm/dd/yy	or	mm/dd/yyyy	US
yy/mm/dd	or	yyyy/mm/dd	South Korea

Notice you may have to fill in the year with all four numbers, or just the final two numbers.

You should always consider your audience, that is, who will read the application when you complete a form. If sending to the United States, use their order, etc. If you have the opportunity, it would be easiest if you write the month using letters, i.e. October or Oct. Also, write the year using the international system in full.

For example, **21 June 2006**

Do not use the Myanmar Buddhist calendar year or the Thai Buddhist calendar year as nobody outside the country will understand.

Always use one birth date

In Myanmar, official birth dates can often be recorded incorrectly by an official issuing a document. This means you may not have the same date of birth on all of your registration and education documents. It is also common for the birth of a child to be registered long after the actual birth, meaning that the 'real' birth date and the 'official' birth date are different.

It is important that you use only one birth date. Ideally it should be your real and official birth date. Like your name, it cannot change. If you are travelling internationally and you have an incorrect date of birth on a document officials might not believe the document is real.



If you are one of the people who unfortunately have different birth dates written on different documents, you will need to choose one date (usually your official birth date which will appear on your passport), or you may want to try to get your incorrect dates changed.



Practice

Below are some names from Myanmar. Write them in the international format.

	First name	Middle name	Surname
Myint Myint Aye			
Win Aung			
Tin Tin Maung Kyi			
U Tin Maung Aung			
Saw Gay Moo			
Ma Khin Mi Mi Lay			



Practice

How would you write your name in international format? What would be your first name, middle name and surname?

3.9 Recommendation letters

Think about

*Why do organisations request recommendation letters?
Who is a good person to write a recommendation letter for you?*

University and scholarship applications require at least one recommendation (reference) letter. This letter is very important and can determine whether or not a person is accepted to a program.

Western recommendation letters are quite different from the traditional Myanmar style letters.

Although it is good to get the letter written by an important person, it is more important that whoever writes the letter knows you well and can write a detailed letter about you from a personal perspective. But it needs to be someone who knows you well in an academic or professional context. You should not get a relative or friend to write your recommendation letter.

Compare the two sample recommendation letters below:

To whom it may concern,

*This is an open letter of reference for *** who was a student at *** school until he graduated last year. I have known him for the past three years since I have been both his form tutor and science teacher.*

*As an experienced teacher with ten years teaching experience I feel qualified to recommend *** for a scholarship to further his study.*

*Throughout the time I taught him *** proved himself to be both intelligent and motivated. He displayed a keen interest in the subjects we covered, and his assignments and exam grades show him to be among the strongest students in the class.*

*In addition, *** has proved himself to be a good team leader and is an engaging and friendly student. He was elected as class prefect for one semester and during that time he showed responsibility and earned the respect of his classmates.*

*Outside of class *** is similarly motivated, working as a volunteer at a local orphanage in his free time.*

*Throughout his time at school *** has always expressed his ambition to become a physiotherapist and I firmly believe he will achieve this goal. He has a plan to return to his home town following graduation and work at the local clinic.*

*I therefore strongly recommend *** for a scholarship to study physiotherapy at university.*

Yours sincerely,

Regarding scholarships

As headmaster of *** school I am writing to inform you that *** is a deserving student who is applying to study teaching at university and needs a scholarship to further her study. She has the necessary qualifications to enter university and has a keen desire to further her education.

She is a hardworking student and this scholarship will help this student attain her goals in life.

Yours sincerely

? What do you think? 1

If you were on a panel selecting students for scholarships which student would you be more likely to award the scholarship to, A or B?

Letter A is far more beneficial to a scholarship application than letter B. Letter A is much more detailed, including personal details about the student plus details about his character. It is clear the science teacher wrote this letter specifically for the student. In contrast, letter B is far less personal, it could be that the letter is a standard letter that is sent out for all students. Perhaps the headmaster doesn't know the student well. Even though the writer of letter B is senior to the writer of letter A, the content makes letter A a far better recommendation letter.

? What do you think? 2

Look at the sample recommendation letter below. What do you think is wrong with this letter?

1st October 2004

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am writing a letter of reference for Ma Lay.

Ma Ley has worked as a volunteer on our community health project for the past year.

I am in a good position to write this reference as I have worked on this project for four years, and I was promoted to manager two years ago. Over the last year I have supervised Ma Ley in her work.

Ma Lay helps us every Saturday morning and we are very grateful for her assistance, she is always very cheerful and friendly, and very reliable.

I therefore can recommend Ma Lay for a job in your company,

Yours sincerely

Here are some tips on what should be included in a recommendation letter:

1. The referee's contact information, email address and phone number if possible.
2. The referee's relationship to the student and how long they have known the student.
3. The referee's qualifications, why they have authority to write the letter.
4. Why the student is good at their subject (if the letter is providing an academic reference).
5. How well the student works in class.
6. Positive comments on the student's character / demeanour.
7. How the student compares to others in the class.
8. Why the referee feels that this student will work for change in Myanmar.
9. Why the student is suitable for their chosen major.
10. Any other comments to encourage the panel to select this student.

You won't be writing your recommendation letter, but you should know what makes a good letter. You may need to suggest what should be included to the person writing your letter.



Practice

Imagine you are a teacher at your high school and have to write a recommendation letter about you. What would the letter say?

Write a draft of the letter.

3.10 SSS and other organizations with similar services

Think about

*Do you need advice or assistance with making a university application?
Do you know of people or organisations that are able to help you?*

The organisations below may be able to give you some help or support.

Student Support Service

The Student Support Service aims to help as many Myanmar students as possible receive a quality higher education outside the country.

The Student Support Service can help students by:

- Providing financial support through the University Application Assistance Scheme to help students apply to university.
- Providing information about universities and scholarships.
- Answering any questions applicants may have.
- Emailing applicants' university and scholarship forms.
- Checking application forms.
- Arranging for payment of university application fees.
- Contacting universities on applicants' behalf if necessary.
- Providing visa and immigration advice for some countries.
- Providing detailed cost profiles, which are required for scholarship applications.

Student Support Services can be contacted at sssmyanmar@gmail.com

Other organisations:

* Note – The Student Support Service is not affiliated with the following organizations and cannot guarantee their services. If you make contact, it is at your own discretion.

American Centre

Address: 14, Tawwin Road, Dagon Township, Yagon, Myanmar.
Phone: (95)-(1) 223-106, 223-140, 221-585 Fax: (95)-(1)-221-262
Hours: 8:00AM to 4:30PM (MON-FRI). Except for Embassy Holidays

The American Center, Rangoon offers cultural, educational, and information programs. It offers courses in English to Burmese adult learners, taught by native English speakers.

It houses the Baldwin Library, with over 13,000 volumes including the latest books on social science, health science, business, international relations, religion, U.S. government and politics, and English language

It also provides workshops, seminars and discussions, and offers an advisory service for those who would like to study further.

http://burma.usembassy.gov/the_american_center.html

British Council

Yangon Address: 78 Kanna Road Yangon
Yangon Phone: +95 (0) 1 254658, 256290, 256291 Fax +95 (0) 1 245345
Yangon Hours: (Self Access Center): 9:30 am to 5:00 pm (Monday to Saturday)
9:00 am to 12:00 pm on Sunday
Mandalay Address: SY Building 30th Street, Between 77th and 78th Street, Mandalay
Mandalay Phone: + 95 (0) 2 33904

The British Council has centres in Yangon and Mandalay.

The centre in Yangon houses a library of 26,000 books plus audio cassettes and DVDs. There is a self-access centre to help you prepare for an exam, further your studies or improve your English. The centre also offers regular activities and an advisory service.

The Mandalay Centre provides a book lending service, support on how to study English effectively and a section containing books for exam preparation.

The British Council also provides on-line resources to learn English.

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/burma-library-services.htm>

JICA and Japanese Embassy

Address: No. 100 Natmauk Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, Myanmar
Phone: 549644 – 47 (to register name); +95-1-549644-8 Fax: +95-1-549643
Hours: (access room) Morning - 09:00 am - 12:30 pm; Afternoon - 14:00 pm - 16:30 pm. You are advised to make an appointment.

The Japanese Embassy has a reference room with information on Japan, plus can provide information on scholarships and study in Japan.

http://www.mm.emb-japan.go.jp/profile/english/culture&info_e.htm

NGOs in the Golden Land of Myanmar

This website provide information on scholarships and study abroad.

<http://www.ngoinmyanmar.org/>

3.11 Thabyay Small Grants Initiative (2009-2010)

Think about:

*How much does it cost to apply to a university?
Can you afford to travel to the university if you need to have an interview or sit an exam? Write a list of the costs you may have when you APPLY to university.*



Aim

The Thabyay Small Grants Initiative aims to help Myanmar students applying for university and scholarship places to cover the costs required to do so. It is not a scholarship program. It does not provide scholarships for study at university, but instead seeks to fill the gaps that other scholarship programs do not cover.

Who is eligible to apply for assistance?

1. Applicants must be citizens of Myanmar.
2. Applicants must intend to study on a Bachelors, Masters, or PhD program within Asia but outside Myanmar. Applicants already studying at university are not eligible to apply for Category 1 support.
3. Applicants seeking assistance for short term training programs are not eligible.
4. All applicants must have completed high school and have strong oral and written English language skills.
5. All applicants must intend to return to Burma upon completion of their studies to work for human development, peace or ethnic reconciliation.
6. Have plans to apply for a Bachelors, Masters, or PhD program in the Asian region. Applications are asked to provide details of the program or programs that they plan to apply for.
7. The program is based on financial need. Students who can afford to cover these basic costs themselves are not eligible for financial support.

What kind of assistance is available?

Applicants can apply for one or more of the following four kinds of support:

- **The cost of internationally accredited examinations** that are required as university entrance qualifications. (eg TOEFL, IELTS, GED), including the costs of travel and accommodation to take these tests.
- **University Application Fees**
- **Charges related to university entrance exams and interviews** and the travel and accommodation costs required to attend.
- **The costs of obtaining a passport and an appropriate student visa.** This can include domestic travel within Myanmar and involve and charges for the translation and authentication of documents.

Although this program coordinates closely with a number of scholarship programs for Myanmar students, a grant from this scheme and successful completion of the university application process does not guarantee a scholarship to study at university.

Your application will be assessed by a committee within two weeks of its receipt, and you can expect to receive a result or a request for further information within a three week period. If you send your application by post, remember it can take more than one week to get to its destination.

The selection panel will take into consideration the following information:

1. **Your financial need.** As mentioned above if you can afford to cover these costs yourself you are not eligible to apply for this assistance.
2. **Your previous academic background.** Please note that although we do not require your academic certificates at this stage they will be checked at a later stage by both the university and the scholarship program.
3. **The likelihood of your application to the university and the scholarship programs being successful.**
4. **The quality of your chosen university and course.**
5. **The relevance of your chosen subject to human development, peace building and reconciliation in Burma.**
6. **The availability of funds.** This program has limited funding.
7. **Your background in social service and your future plans.**

Application for assistance from this program can be made at any time so long as the student has a clear plan and is aware of the application process and calendar for their chosen university and course. If you would like to apply, please do so as soon as possible. Please email your application to sssmyanmar@gmail.com. If you do not have access to email you can send it to:

PO Box 8, Mae Ping Post Office, Chiang Mai, 50301 Thailand

If you have any questions or would like further information about this initiative please contact sssmyanmar@gmail.com.

3.12 Writing a CV or resume

Think about

What are CVs and what are they used for?

Are people ever required to submit a CV in Myanmar?

What is a CV and what is it used for?

CV is the abbreviation for *curriculum vitae*, which means 'life history'.

We use a CV when we are applying for jobs and want an employer to choose us over all the other applicants.

The purpose of your CV is to make you sound qualified and interesting, and to make the company you are applying to think you are worth considering for the job, and so want to give you a job interview. An employer may have several hundred enquiries for a single job; he or she will only choose a few people who appear suitable for interview.

Therefore, your CV must be as good as you can make it.

? What do you think?

Look at the list in the table below. Tick the items that you think should be included in a CV. Then check your answers at the end of this section.

Name		Telephone number		Essays	
Parents names		Permanent address		Height	
Birth date		Age		E-mail address	
Friends names		Favourite colour		Languages	
Photograph		Biography		Weight	
Skills		Job activities		Ethnicity	
Parents' address		Temporary address		Work experience	
Gender		Volunteer activities		Hobbies	
Work history		Training		References	
Objectives		Passport number		Marital status	

Think about

Imagine you are a manager in a busy office with a pile of CVs to look through. How would you decide which applicants to call for interview and which to reject?

You need to design a CV that is easy to read, short and attractive.

Information to put on a CV:

- **Personal details**

Name, contact address, phone number, email address, date of birth. If your name does not obviously show if you are male or female, you could include this but it is not essential.

- **Education**

Give places of education where you have studied - most recent education first. Earlier education such as junior school is not relevant.

Give the name of the institution, the course name(s) plus any special project, thesis, or dissertation work you did. Pre-college courses (high school, etc.) should then be included, including grades.

- **Work experience**

List your most recent work experience first. Also include any part-time work you have done.

Give the name of your employer, job title, and very important, what you actually did and achieved in that job.

- **Interests**

Any activities where you have leadership or responsibility, or which involve you in relating to others in a team will be of most interest. Give only enough detail to explain briefly.

A one-person interest is of less interest, unless it connects with the work you wish to do.

If you have published any articles, jointly or by yourself, or if you have been involved in any type of volunteer work, do give details.

- **Skills**

Any ability in other languages, computing experience, or possession of a driving licence should be included.

▪ **References**

Usually give two names - one from your place of study, and one from any work situation you have had. Give referees day and evening phone numbers if possible.

Make sure that referees are willing to give you a reference.

▪ **Other details**

Include any other details you think are important in relation to the job you are applying for, such as travel, publications, awards, memberships.

▪ **Style**

The simplest way to organise your CV is chronologically. Information is included under general headings - education, work experience, etc., with the most recent events first.

▪ **Length**

Maybe everything you need to say will fit onto one sheet of A4. But do not crowd it - you will probably need two sheets. Do not normally go longer than this.

Remember the employer will have many CVs to read and will not have time to read through a long CV to find the information they need. You need to have everything the employer needs to see written clearly and concisely.

▪ **Optional extras**

It can be good to start with a Personal Profile/Objective statement. This is a two or three sentence overview of your skills, qualities, hopes, and plans. It should encourage the employer to read the rest of the CV.

Information NOT to put on a CV

Height	Passport or ID numbers
Weight	Copies of passports, ID cards
Parents' info	Copies of degrees, awards etc
Why you want a particular job	Essays
Why you are suited for the job	Biographies
Your key points and personality	Marital status
Specific information on the job you are applying for	
Lengthy paragraphs	

Some CV tips:

- A CV should be typed, well laid out, and on good quality printer paper.
- Do not use too many different fonts and text sizes.
- Make sure spelling is correct.
- Do not write long paragraphs – nobody wants to read them.
- Keep a copy of your CV saved on a computer or USB, then you can customise it (change it slightly) according to the specific job you are applying for.
- After you have written your CV get someone else to read it and give you feedback.

There is a sample CV below.

JOHN WILLIAMS

16 Bridge Street, Newtown
WESSEX, GT5 6JD
jvcw2@uoecs.ac.uk

A highly motivated and professional manager of information services with a Masters in Computer Networks and sixteen years experience in providing IT services.

EDUCATION & QUALIFICATIONS

- 1998-2000** **MSc Computer Networks**
University of Uptown List major courses that made up the program &
Include details of dissertation/thesis
- 1981-1984** **BSc Maths with Information Technolgy**
University of Unishire Again list the major courses which made up the
Degree program
- 1976-1981** **GCE 'A' Levels**
Uptown High School Maths (B), Psycholgy (A), IT (B)

WORK EXPERIENCE

- 1984 – 2000** **Uptown Health Authority**
Manager Information Services based at the Health Authority HQ. Responsible for overall management of a large unit that provides IT Services to the Health Authority. The team consists of 35 members of staff made up of programmers, network administrators, engineers, trainers & clerical assistants. During my time as manager the team has successfully installed a new purpose built system across the Health Authority. I was originally employed as a programmer, becoming a supervisor, assistant manager then manager in 1995.
- 1982 – 1984** **Northern Supermarket Group**
Worked in the Unishire branch for two and a half years, beginning as a shelf stacker. I was quickly promoted to cashier and after one year promoted again to supervisor. As a supervisor I was responsible for allocating the staff rotas for my team and ensuring that we worked in the most efficient way. My employment was on a part-time basis during term-time and full-time during Christmas, Easter & Summer vacations.

PERSONAL INTERESTS

School Governor: In 1998 I was elected a parent governor, becoming Vice-Chair in 1999. My duties involved me in all areas of management of this medium sized school (250 pupils,) and I am an active member of the Finance & General Purposes Sub-Committee and the IT Strategy Committee.

Languages: Since taking GCSEs at school I have continued to improve my standard of French & German taking regular trips to both countries. I prefer to visit areas not normally associated with tourists where I can gain experience of local cultures as well as the language.

Sports: I am a member of the Health Authority Football team, which plays in a local league. Last year we were successful in being promoted to the Premier division. I play golf regularly and assist in running classes for young children at our local driving range.

REFEREES

Mr A.C. Smith Chief Executive Uptown Health Authority Uptown	Prof S.D. Jones University of Uptown Campus Road Uptown
---	--



Check your understanding 1

Read the sample CV above and answer these questions:

1. What adjectives does John use to describe himself in his personal profile?
2. What is John William's highest qualification?
3. What are the four positions John has held during his time at Upton Health Authority?
4. What did John do at the same time as studying for his BSc in Maths with information technology?
5. What responsibilities does John have outside of his job?
6. Which languages can John speak?
7. How do the referees know John?



Check your understanding 2

Look at the sample CV below and make a list of everything that is wrong with the CV.

CURRICULUM VITAE	
Personal Details	
Name: Ying Kham	Sex: Female
Date of Birth: 29th February 1995	Marital status: Single
Address: Taunggyi	Nationality: Shan
Education	
1993 – 1996 Taunggyi Junior School	
1997 - 2001 Taunggyi High School 10 th standard	
2003 – 2004 Delhi University – 1 st year	
<u>Work History</u>	
2005 - 2006: Worked at hotel in Mandalay	
Extracurricular Activities	
Watching movies	
Listening to music	
Member of community organisation	
General Skills	
Speak 3 languages	
Word Procesing Skills	
References	
Sai Peter – same address as above	



Practice

Practice writing your own CV. Use the outline below, which is similar to the sample CV, to help you.

NAME

Address

Personal profile

EDUCATION & QUALIFICATIONS

WORK EXPERIENCE

PERSONAL INTERESTS

REFEREES

3.13 Writing a cover letter

Think about

What is a cover letter?

Why is it important to use cover letters?

A cover letter is a letter of introduction accompanying another document. This document would usually be a CV, but could also be a university or scholarship application, among others. The letter will tell the person who receives your application exactly what you are applying for. Writing cover letters is a useful skill to learn.

For this section we will focus on writing cover letters for job applications.

Who needs a cover letter?

Everyone who sends out a CV! Even if the cover letter never “came up” in conversation or wasn’t mentioned in an advertisement, it’s expected that you will write one.

What should be put in a cover letter?

Information that a CV doesn’t give:

- Specific information on the job you are applying for.
- Why you want a particular job.
- Why you are suited for the job.
- Your key points and personality.

Why do we use cover letters?

- to get a boss to read your CV
- to introduce yourself and describe key points/personality
- to state what you can do for the organization
- to say why you want this job
- to say why you are suitable for this job
- to give you the opportunity to draw your readers’ attention to specific qualifications – qualifications that you think will impress your readers the most
- to provide a sample of your written communications skills - showing you can write well will demonstrate your intelligence and help to establish your credibility

Structure of a cover letter

1. Heading: Your name, phone number, address, email
2. Heading: Date applying
3. Heading: Person applying to: name, position, address
4. Greeting: Dear XXX,
5. Single space paragraphs
6. Salutation,
7. Signed name
8. Typed name

A cover letter, just like most business letters, has four paragraphs as follows:

- Paragraph 1 - Introduce yourself and explain why you're writing
- Paragraph 2 - Lay out your key skills and accomplishments
- Paragraph 3 - Explain why you want to work for the company
- Paragraph 4 - Thank the reader, invite him/her to contact you and lay out your follow-up plans

Make sure the space at the top and the bottom of the letter is the same.

Ko Win Naing
81 Upper Pazandaung Road
Yangon
Myanmar
Kwn2009@email.com
0311976

Use standard margins for your letter, such as one inch margins on all sides of your document.

28th June 2007

Ms June Thompson, Human Resources Manager
Higher English Private School
Sukhamvit Road
Bangkok
Thailand

Dear Ms Thompson:

Single space your cover letter

As an experienced professional in the field of teaching, I am applying for your position of Advanced Level English tutor, as advertised on your website. With a Masters degree in English plus ten years experience teaching English as a second language I would be a valuable asset to your school.

Leave a space between each paragraph

My current teaching position is as a tutor in a prestigious language school in Yangon, preparing students for TOEFL and IELTS examinations. Although the main aim of the program is to develop academic and grammatically correct English I strongly believe an ability to communicate in everyday English usage is vitally important and therefore my classes focus on student centered, productive learning, with time given to developing conversation skills.

In addition, being a second language learner myself I fully understand the difficulties Asian students experience when learning English, and I am able to develop lessons that help them overcome these difficulties.

Though I thoroughly enjoy my teaching position in Yangon I would very much like to experience the education system of another country as I believe this will help me to further develop my teaching skills and my career.

I look forward to hearing from you, and please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely

Sign your name in ink between your salutation and typed name.

Leave three spaces between your salutation and typed name.

Ko Win Naing

Good cover letters:

- Have no spelling / grammar / typing errors.
- Are addressed to a specific person who does hiring / selecting: rather than the department in general.
- Are written in your own words: you may be interviewed later.
- Show that you know something about the organisation you are applying to.
- Are quick and easy to read.

**Practice**

Practice writing a cover letter that you would submit with your university application.

3.14 Interview skills

Think about

*Have you ever been interviewed for a job or university place?
What are the right things to say during an interview?*

At some stage in your life you will need to attend an interview. Some universities or scholarship programs may ask you to attend an interview before they reach their decision (though this is unlikely if you are living in a different country). After graduation, when you start applying for jobs, you will again need to attend interviews.

It is likely that when you are called for an interview the interviewer has included you on a shortlist of several people. The interview will determine who from the shortlist will be accepted.

It's therefore important that you develop good interview skills.

What is the purpose of an interview?**? What do you think?**

Why might the university or scholarship organisation want to interview you?

What are the interviewers looking for?**? What do you think?**

Write down what will the interviewers be looking for during the interview?

What might you be asked?

You will be asked questions related to the information you wrote on your application form. You will be asked why you are interested in the course or job you are applying for. If you are applying to study a particular major you will be asked questions about that major to see how much knowledge you have of the subject you have chosen to study and why you want to study it. If you are applying for a job you may be asked why you think you would be good at the job.

Interview questions could include:

- Tell me about yourself
- Why did you choose ... University / your degree subject?
- Explaining gaps on your application form
- What are your main strengths and weaknesses?
- What other courses / scholarships are you applying for?
- Where do you see yourself in five years time?
- Tell me about any work experience you have

Sometimes you may be asked hypothetical questions. These are questions about a situation that might happen. For these questions you have to think about what you would do in this situation.

What should you say during an interview?

It is important that you listen carefully to what the interviewer asks and answer the question exactly. Try not to become sidetracked and talk about something that seems interesting or important to you, but is not what the interviewer asked about. Give answers that are detailed, but concise.

Remember, your answers should prove to the interviewers that you are a good candidate for the course or job.

What should you not say?

What do you think?

Write down what you think you should NOT say in an interview?

What should you wear?

What you wear is very important in an interview. Even before you speak your appearance will tell the interviewer a lot about you. It is important that you dress smart and formally. Make sure your clothes are ironed and do not have holes. Do not wear clothes with pictures or writing on them. Women should not wear lots of jewellery.

First impressions

A first impression is what someone thinks of you when they first meet you. An interview is where the interviewers create a first impression of you. Based on what you say, the way you speak and how you are dressed, they will make judgements about your ability and personality. You should try to appear confident and friendly (but not over friendly), and at the same time formal.

Don't worry if you are nervous. Many people feel nervous at interviews, and the interviewers know this.

Questions you can ask

Usually at the end of an interview the interviewer will ask you if you have any questions you would like to ask them. It is good to have a couple of questions prepared. If you don't have any questions it gives the impression that you are not interested.

Make sure the questions are relevant to the interview, but are not asking for information you should already know. Don't ask questions if the information is already included on the application form or website, it will give the impression you have not researched what you are applying for. However it is fine to ask the interviewer to explain some information you didn't understand

Don't ask the interviewer personal questions such as 'which country are you from', or 'have you ever been to Myanmar', as these are not relevant to the interview.

Tips

- Be punctual – arriving late for an interview gives a bad first impression.
- Reread the application form before the interview – make sure you remember all the information you wrote on the form – you could be asked about it.
- Read the information about the course, scholarship or job before the interview. Even if you have read it several times before it is good to read it again so it is clear in your mind.
- Avoid giving simple yes / no answers – always give details.

? Practice

Either on your own or with a friend practice answering these interview questions:

1. Why do you want to study _____ (your chosen major)?
2. What do you plan to do after you graduate?
3. What is the most important thing you'd like to achieve in the future and why?
4. Why should we give you a scholarship to study?
5. What are your strengths and weaknesses?

Note – When giving your strengths and weaknesses it is good to give a couple of each. Don't give lots of weaknesses and no strengths; similarly don't give strengths and no weaknesses.

3.15 Equivalence Exams

Think about

What can you do if you do not have the required qualifications to enter university?

One problem for students from Myanmar is that many universities do not recognize high school certificates from Myanmar as an adequate qualification. This is because most universities require students to have completed 12 years of secondary education, not the 10 years of Myanmar's high school system.

Universities generally accept students from Myanmar who have completed high school plus two years at university. Students who have not studied at university need to study for an equivalence exam.

Equivalence exams assess students' academic ability. They don't assess students' English ability, but a certain level of English is needed for students to perform well in these exams.

You usually need to sit for an equivalence exam nine months before you are expected to enter university, so you need to start preparing well in advance. Registration fees vary, but can be expensive. For example, a set of GED exams, taken in Thailand, cost US\$400.

Even if you have good English language skills you still need to study for these exams and do some practice tests to become familiar with the style of the questions.

Below are some of the equivalence exams available. For more information on these and others see the Myanmar Study Abroad website.

GED – General Educational Diploma

The GED certifies that the taker has attained US or Canadian high school-level academic skills. It is accepted in many countries, including most universities in Thailand.

For most Myanmar students the GED ensures you are at a level of high school that is internationally accepted. Most universities will not accept a Myanmar tenth standard pass certificate because in most countries graduating from high school requires twelve years of study. If you pass GED it will count as twelve years.

To pass the GED you must pass five individual tests:

- Language arts, writing
- Language arts, reading
- Social studies
- Science
- Mathematics

It is worth noting that the GED is easier to pass and requires less preparation than the IGCSE and SAT.

The GED is not currently offered in Myanmar, the nearest testing site is Thailand. It is administered in Thailand by Prometric Educational Testing, in Bangkok. Seats are usually limited in testing centres so it is advisable to book two months in advance.

The Myanmar Study Abroad website, and the Student Support Service can provide more information on this test. The Student Support Service may also be able to assist with fees through their University Application Assistance Scheme.

The website for information on taking the GED test in Bangkok is:

<http://www.prometric.com/GED/default.htm>.

For more information about the structure of the test visit the official GED testing website at:

<http://www.acenet.edu/AM/Template.cfm?Section=GEDTS>

Since the GED is not offered in Myanmar, and therefore it is necessary to travel to Thailand to take the test, the cost of taking the test is high. To sit this test you will need to pay for:

<i>Myanmar passport</i>	
<i>Thai tourist visa</i>	-US\$30
<i>Return flights to Thailand</i>	-US\$210 +
<i>Accommodation while in Thailand</i>	-US\$10 per night
<i>GED exams</i>	-US\$400
<i>Local travel while in Thailand</i>	-US\$10
<i>(airport to hotel, hotel to test site etc)</i>	

So the total expense will be over US\$660, plus the cost of obtaining a Myanmar passport

IGCSE – International General Certificate of Secondary Education

The IGCSE is an international qualification for school students. It is offered in Myanmar by the British Council. Cambridge IGCSE is recognised by academic institutions and employers around the world.

Cambridge IGCSE covers subjects from a range of areas; languages, humanities, social sciences, mathematics, creative, technical and vocational. Students decide which subjects they would like to study, with each subject counting as one IGCSE. Most universities in Asia require students to have at least five IGCSEs – i.e. passes in five subjects.

IGCSE can be taken with or without course work and it is intended for students whose first language is not English.

IGCSE exams are designed to take account of students with differing abilities; there is a choice between Core and Extended in most subjects. The Extended in each subject comprises of the Core plus a Supplement (extra topics or the same topics in more depth). Those passing the Core can achieve grades C to G those passing the Extended can achieve grades A to C.

IGCSE is recognised as equivalent in standard to the British GCSE and ‘O’ level exams, which students usually take after twelve years of education. In the UK these exams are pre-requisites to ‘A’ level qualifications.

IGCSE exams are offered twice a year, in January and in May/June, and results can take two months. For more information contact the British Council or visit the Myanmar Study Abroad website or the IGCSE website at:
<http://www.cie.org.uk>

IGCSE exams cost around US\$115 per subject, with some exams slightly higher. Which means a set of five IGCSEs will cost you around US\$600. Although you don't need to travel to another country to take these exams you also need to budget for travel to the test centre in Yangon and accommodation while you are there.

**Note – Candidates wishing to enter British universities are usually required to have 2 or 3 A'level passes in addition to 5 IGCSEs, though requirements vary between universities.*

SAT – the Scholastic Aptitude Test

There are two SAT tests, reasoning and subject tests. Most US universities require candidates take the reasoning test. The SAT is also useful for studying in the Philippines, and at Thammasat university in Thailand.

The SAT reasoning test is a three hour test, mostly multiple choice.

The SAT is administered seven times a year, and can be taken at the American Centre in Yangon. You must take the exam by December for enrolment in an American university the following August or September.

For more information on taking the SAT you can contact the American Centre in Yangon. For information about the test go to a SAT practice website at:
<http://www.sylvum.com/s.pl/sat/>.

**Note - See the Myanmar Study Abroad website for information on other equivalence tests.*

3.15 English requirements

Think about

*Is your level of English good enough to study at university?
Do you find it easy or difficult to understand the content of this book? (If you find the level of English in this book difficult to understand you will need to improve your level of English before going to university).*

It is important that you have an adequate level of English to be able to study at university. For students who are not native speakers of English, or do not have a qualification which proves they have an adequate level of English, it will be necessary to take an English test. Many universities require non-native English speakers to take a TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) test, specifying a minimum score in the test as a pre-requisite to entrance to university.

Other English tests that students may be required to take are IELTS (International English Language Testing System) or CAE (Certificate in Advanced English).

Students have to arrange to take the test and pay for it themselves – universities do not do this. IELTS is offered at the British Council in Yangon (the British Council in Mandalay does not offer the test, though you can register there to take the test in Yangon), and TOEFL at the American Centre, International School, and Grand Plaza Park Royal in Yangon.

Preparation

These English tests will use a different style of testing to what you are used to in Myanmar. Therefore it is necessary for you to prepare for the test. Even if your level of English is high you need to familiarise yourself with the test structure, style of questions and time requirements. IELTS, TOEFL and CAE all have books on test preparation and practice.

Be sure to contact test centres well in advance of when you need to take the test, and do this in advance of when you need to apply for university. The American Centre offers the TOEFL test four times per year, the results are released five weeks after the test; the British Council offers the IELTS every month, and results are released two weeks after the test.

Test practice books are available in Myanmar. The American Centre has TOEFL practice books, and the British Council has IELTS. ICE Youth library has both TOEFL and IELTS books.

TOEFL – Test of English as a Foreign Language

TOEFL tests students' abilities to use and understand American English at college level. It is currently the most widely used standardisation test. American Universities require international students to take this test. Universities in other countries generally accept TOEFL and IELTS.

The cost in Myanmar to take this test is US\$150, and must be paid for in US dollars. The test is offered five times a year, but it is necessary to book four months in advance as these tests get fully booked.

The TOEFL test has four sections, reading, listening, speaking and writing. The whole test is four hours long. There are three versions of the test, paper, computer and internet. However, only paper is available in Myanmar.

Here are some sample questions from a TOEFL test. Note that the TOEFL test does not rely on memorisation but on practical English usage. Memorising these questions would NOT help you pass a TOEFL test.

Structure

Circle the answer that best completes the sentence.

1. Refrigerating meats _____ the spread of bacteria.
 - A. retards
 - B. retarding
 - C. to retard
 - D. is retarded
2. Throughout the animal kingdom, _____ bigger than the elephant.
 - A. whale is only the
 - B. only the whale is
 - C. is the whale only
 - D. only whale is the
3. The fact _____ money orders can usually be easily cashed has made them a popular form of payment.
 - A. of
 - B. that
 - C. is that
 - D. which is
4. The first article of the United States Constitution gives Congress _____ to pass laws.
 - A. the power
 - B. has the power
 - C. the power is
 - D. of the power

Written Expression

Identify the underlined word that needs to be changed for the sentence to be correct.

5. Electrical disturbances and the Earth are frequently caused with storms on the surface of the sun.
6. Inventor Granville Woods received him first patent on January 3 1884, for a steam boiler furnace.
7. A deficient of folic acid is rarely found in humans because the vitamin is contained in a wide variety of foods.

Reading

The railroad was not the first institution to impose regularity on society, or to draw attention to the importance of precise timekeeping. For as long as merchants have set out their wares at daybreak and communal festivities have been celebrated, people have been in rough agreement with their neighbours as to the time of day. The value of this tradition is today more apparent than ever. Were it not for public acceptance of a single yardstick of time, social life would be unbearably chaotic; the massive daily transfers of goods, services, and information would proceed in fits and starts; the very fabric of modern society would begin to unravel.

Circle the correct answer:

8. What is the main idea of the passage?

- a. In modern society we must make more time for our neighbours.
- b. The traditions in society are timeless.
- c. An accepted way of measuring time is essential for the smooth functioning of society.
- d. Society judges people by the times at which they conduct certain activities.

9. In line 4 the phrase 'this tradition' refers to

- a. the practice of starting the business day at dawn.
- b. the friendly relations between neighbours.
- c. the railroad's reliance on time schedules.
- d. people's agreement on the measurement of time

Answers:

- | | | | |
|--------------|--------------|---------------------------|------|
| 1. a | 2. b | 3. b | 4. a |
| 5. with (by) | 6. him (his) | 7. deficient (deficiency) | |
| 8. c | 9. d | | |

Notice that the TOEFL test not only uses a high level of vocabulary and grammar, but focuses on a broad range of topics and concepts that you might not be familiar with. This is why it is important you prepare for the test and practice with sample questions.

IELTS – International English Language Testing System

IELTS is accepted by most Australian, British, Canadian and New Zealand universities. American universities are starting to recognise it. The cost in Myanmar to take this test is US\$145, and must be booked at least one month before the test. The test must be paid for in US dollars.

The IELTS test consists of four sections, reading, writing, speaking and listening and takes three hours to complete.

Below are some sample questions from an IELTS test. As with TOEFL, the IELTS test does not rely on memorisation but on practical English usage. Memorising these questions would NOT help you pass an IELTS test.

Writing Task

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Write about the following topic.

It is inevitable that as technology develops so traditional cultures must be lost. Technology and tradition are incompatible – you cannot have both together.

To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Give reasons for your answer and include relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write at least 250 words.

General Reading

Read the passage below and answer questions 1-10

Daybreak trips by coach

SPRING IS IN THE AIR!

Welcome to our Spring Daybreak programme which continues the tradition of offering daytrips and tours at unbeatable value for money. All the excursions in this brochure will be operated by Premier Travel Services Limited or Millers Coaches; both companies are part of the CHL Group, which owns Cambridge's Cambus fleet.

WE'RE PROUD OF OUR TRADITION

Premier was established in 1936; the Company now offers the highest standards of coach travel in today's competitive operating environment. Millers has an enviable reputation stretching back over the past 20 years, offering value for money coach services at realistic prices. We've travelled a long way since our early days of pre-war seaside trips. Now our fleet of 50 modern coaches (few are more than five years old) operate throughout Britain and Europe but we're pleased to maintain the high standards of quality and service that were the trademark of our founders nearly sixty years ago.

EXCLUSIVE FEATURES

All Daybreak fares (unless specifically stated otherwise) include admission charges to the attractions, shows and exhibits we visit. Many full day scenic tours are accompanied by a fully trained English

Tourist Board 'Blue Badge' guide or local experienced driver/guide. Some Daybreaks include lunch or afternoon tea. Compare our admission inclusive fares and see how much you save. The cheapest is not necessarily the best and value for money is guaranteed with Daybreaks. If you compare our bargain Daybreak fares beware - most of our competitors do not offer an all inclusive fare.

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Do I need to book?

Booking in advance is strongly recommended as all Daybreak tours are subject to demand. Subject to availability, stand-by tickets can be purchased from the driver.

What time does the coach leave?

The coach departs from Cambridge Drummer Street (Bay 12) at the time shown. There are many additional joining points indicated by departure codes in the brochure. If you are joining at one of our less popular joining points, you will be advised of your pick up time (normally by telephone) not less than 48 hours before departure. In this way, we can minimise the length of pick-up routes and reduce journey times for the majority of passengers.

What time do we get back?

An approximate return time is shown for each excursion. The times shown serve as a guide, but road conditions can sometimes cause delay. If your arrival will be later than advertised, your driver will try to allow for a telephone call during the return journey.

Where can I board the coach?

All the Daybreaks in the brochure leave from Cambridge Drummer Street (Bay 12) at the time shown. Many Daybreaks offer additional pick-ups for pre-booked passengers within Cambridge and the surrounding area. This facility must be requested at the time of booking.

Questions 1-10 Do the following statements agree with the information given in the passage above?

TRUE if the statement agrees with the information
FALSE if the statement contradicts the information
NOT GIVEN if there is no information on this

1. Millers Coaches owns Cambridge's Cambus fleet.
2. Premier is an older company than Millers.
3. Most of the Daybreak coaches are less than 5 years old.
4. Daybreak fares are more expensive than most of their competitors.
5. Soft drinks and refreshments are served on most longer journeys.
6. Smoking is permitted at the rear of the coach on longer journeys.
7. Tickets must be bought in advance from an authorised Daybreak agent.
8. Tickets and seats can be reserved by phoning the Daybreak Hotline.
9. Daybreak passengers must join their coach at Cambridge Drummer Street.
10. Daybreak cannot guarantee return times.

Answers: 1. F 2. T 3. T 4. F 5. NG
6. F 7. F 8. NG 9. F 10. T

Notice that the passage for the general reading is quite long, again with high vocabulary and Western concepts.

CAE - Certificate of Advanced English

CAE is recognised by British Universities. The test has an emphasis on real world-tasks, with material taken from a range of media such as newspapers, magazines, leaflets, radio broadcasts and speeches. Tests can be taken twice a year, and can be arranged through the British council in Yangon.

The test has five parts, reading, writing, English in use, speaking and listening.

Below is an extract from an English in Use test. Once again, memorisation of questions will not help you pass the test.

* You can find more detailed information about taking these English tests in Myanmar on the Myanmar Study Abroad website.

English in Use

1. Write the correct words in the blank spaces.

Music Magazine Has Eye on China

US publication Rolling Stone magazine is _____ to launch in China. The magazine _____ should hit shelves early next year, will focus on China's emerging youth culture as well _____ foreign arts and entertainment. Rolling Stone _____ first published in San Francisco in 1967 to chronicle cultural changes in the US. "We feel Chinese music and arts _____ maturing rapidly and that a Chinese edition _____ be viable," says Jimmy Jung, of One World Publishing. Rolling Stone _____ licensed Hong Kong-based One World to publish the Chinese language edition...

2. Think of one word that can be used appropriately in all three sentences.

- A) 1. A good diet and fitness _____ a large part in helping people live longer.
2. So far, the company has refused to _____ ball, preferring to remain independent.
3. Rain stopped _____ after only an hour.
- B) 1. I can't believe Colin doesn't _____ like sport.
2. Families somehow survived, _____ as they were being torn apart by the war.
3. Once in a while why not take advantage of the smooth, _____ surface to concentrate on your control and technique.
- C) 1. She's a woman without fear, with a _____ of her own, who says what she thinks.
2. He didn't _____ that other people thought him odd.
3. If you want to carry on with what you were doing, please don't _____ me.

Answers

1. about/set/poised which as was are could/would has
2. play even mind

Taking these exams is expensive. You want to be sure that when you take them you are well prepared so you have a good chance of passing first time. Since these exams are of a high standard you need to study to be able to pass them.

Do:

- Allow plenty of time.
Plan ahead and start to prepare for the exam well in advance of the test date. Preparation requires a lot of study, for example, a TOEFL study book provides 80 hours of study to help you prepare for the test.
- Obtain the materials to help you prepare for the exam.
Ask the test centre if they have any preparation materials like books or CDs you can borrow. These books may provide structured courses for you to follow.
- Look for information on the websites.
Look up the exam you will be taking on the internet – they all have their own websites. These websites contain sample questions and tips for taking the exams.

- Find out what the sections on the exam are.

It always helps if you know what to expect in the exam. Find out the sections, how long the exam will be, and how many questions you have to answer in the given time.

- What is the style of the exam?

It could be essay, multiple choice, short answer, true or false, or other styles of questions. It is much easier to answer questions if you are familiar with the question style and have already had practice answering questions.

- How long is the exam?

How much time do you have? Many students fail exams because they work too slowly and run out of time. Time management is an important exam technique. You have to answer all the questions in the given time. You will not be allowed extra time if you have not completed all the questions. Practice answering questions within the given amount of time.

- Take a preparation course before the exam.

Many test centres offer preparation courses. If you can enrol on one of these it will help you greatly in your preparation.

- Take practice exams.

This is a very important preparation technique. After you have studied the content that you need to learn, sit down somewhere quiet and pretend you are doing the exam for real. Allow your self the allotted amount of time. See how you get on. At first you may make many mistakes and run out of time, but with practice you will improve.

Don't:

- Don't memorise sample questions.

New questions are written for each exam. Sample questions and practice exams are usually based on old exam papers, and although the style of question will be the same, the actual questions won't be used. Memorising the answers to old questions won't help you.

- Don't look at answers to sample questions before you have tried to answer them yourself.

It is tempting to read the sample questions and then look to see how they should be answered. This won't help you learn! It is much better to try to work out the answer yourself, then look at the correct answer when you have finished. This is a much more effective way to learn.



Check your understanding

Answer *true*, *false* or *not given* to these questions:

1. You shouldn't prepare for exams until just before the test date.
2. Study materials can be purchased from book shops.
3. It helps to know the structure of the exam.
4. Taking the exam is easier if you are familiar with the style of questions.
5. Examiners will give you more time to complete the exam if you need it.
6. Preparation courses are expensive.
7. Taking practice exams won't help you.
8. Past questions will not be used again.
9. Taking exams is fun.
10. It is best to answer practice questions yourself before looking at the answers.