



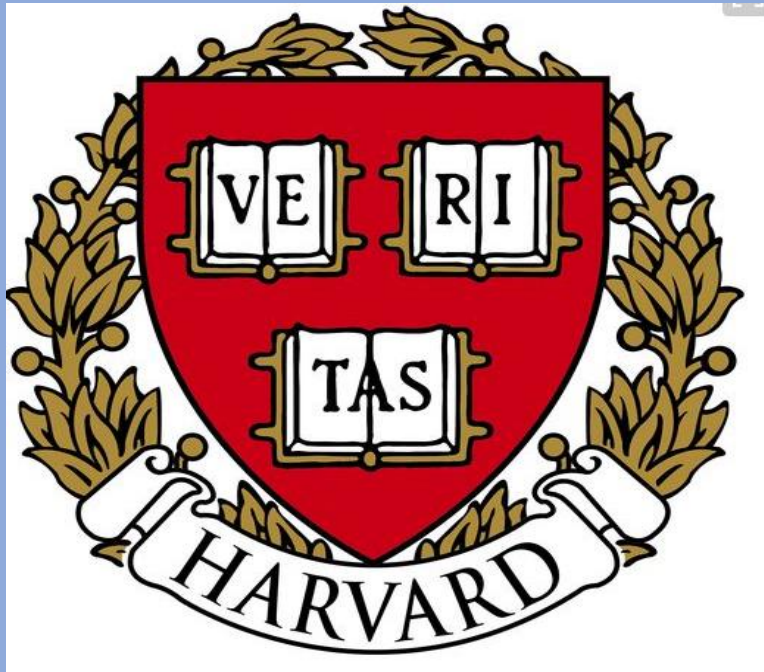
Case Study

GETTING INTO HARVARD



Elite US Schools are looking for 2 main qualities in applicants:

- Students who are going to accomplish great things
- Students who are going to contribute positively to their communities while in college



Elite colleges believe that the best predictor of future achievement is past achievement.

Your application has to convince the admission team that based on your achievements so far you are going to continue to succeed and achieve great things in college and beyond.

Most students aiming for elite schools make the mistake of trying to be too “well rounded”. They will try to show competency in a whole variety of skills: playing an instrument, playing a sport, volunteering, joining after school clubs etc. This is not the best approach: the more areas you try to explore, the less deeply you'll explore any one of them.



A better approach is persistent focus on one or a small number of interests. What's important is that **you demonstrate the capacity for success.** Essentially, **you need to prove that you're capable of deep accomplishment in one or more fields.**



Admissions officers are looking for something about your application that catches their interest and focuses their attention. Your application's job is to support a particular story, a particular "application persona: every piece of your application should be consistent with this story.

The major components of an application to the US are:

- Grades/GPA
- Test Scores
- Extracurriculars & Awards
- Recommendation letters
- College Essays

Extracurricular activities are where you can truly stand out, since the other components don't differ that much between most applicants. Your aim is to accomplish more than the typical well-rounded student does by focusing your time on one or a small range of activities where you can excel. This will of course need to be something that you are genuinely interested in! You need to be able to show a deep achievement in an area where you have a real passion - something that will set you apart from other candidates.



Princeton are looking for these qualities:

“Several hundred of our admitted students each year have the kind of stunning academic credentials that our faculty believe place them among the best potential scholars of their generation..... There are also several hundred students who pursued some activity to an unusual degree. Such students ... have outstanding achievements largely because of their strong personal qualities. They have made a commitment to pursue something they love, believe in and value – and to do so with singular energy, discipline and plain old hard work.”



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