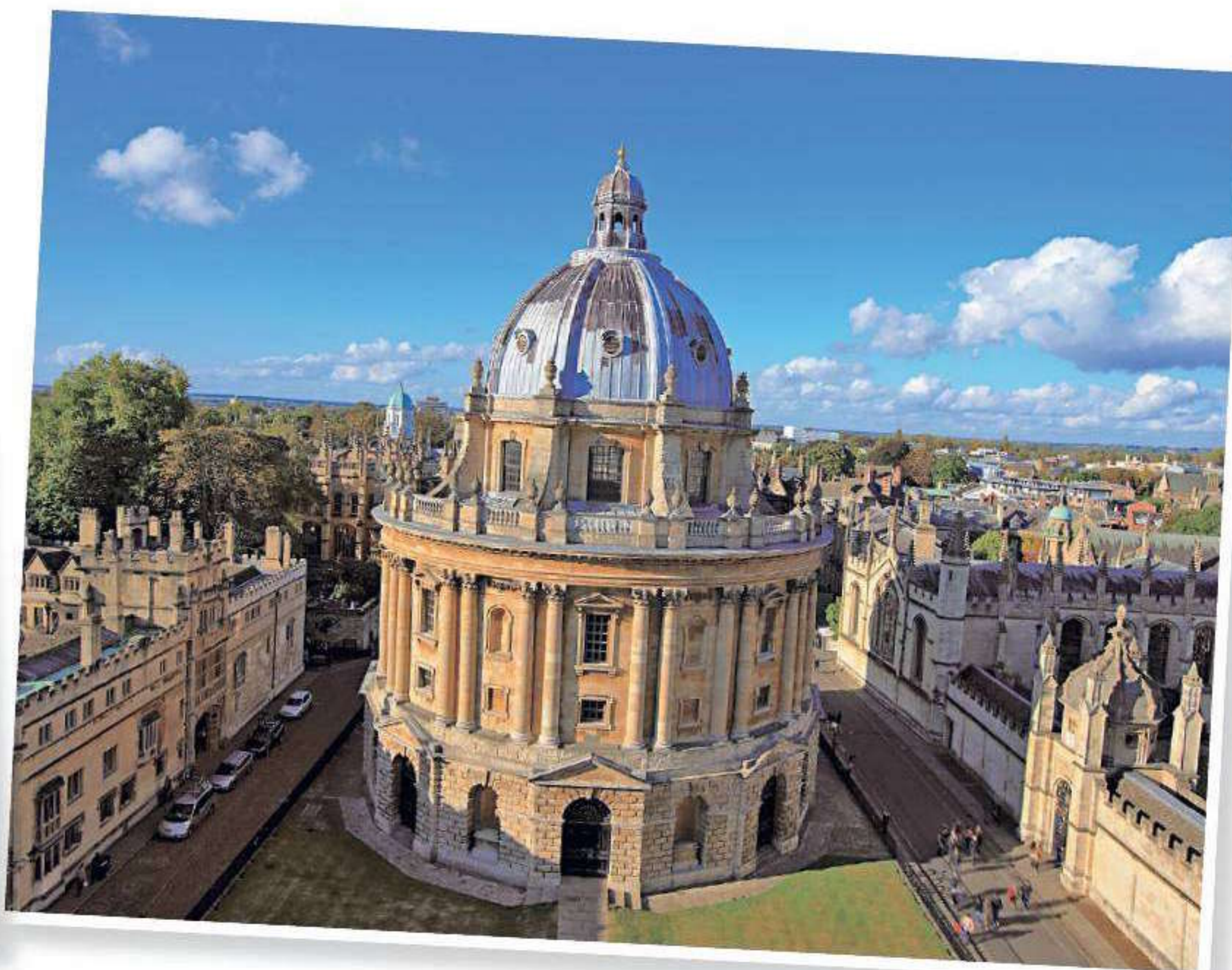




International School & IB Program

Finding the right fit matters

The Edge Learning Center offers expert advice on the importance of IB for overseas education, and how to cruise through the tedious college application process.



The IB is one of the most universally recognized education programs internationally, benefitting more than one million students in more than 146 countries, and for this reason, the program plays a crucial role in students that are looking to study overseas. Education experts at The Edge Learning Center remind parents and students that there are clear differences between studying in the UK and the US.

“There are many differences between US and UK study. But the most obvious and important difference which everyone should bear in mind is that in the US, you may change your major several times throughout your college career. You may also double or triple or quadruple major, depending on the university you go to,” says Ally Ip, Senior Admissions Consulting Partner. “In the UK, however, you are mostly not allowed to change your major even if you have found out that you no longer want to study it. It is the academic flexibility that is the most obvious.”

“The fact that the IB Diploma Program is highly structured impacts US and UK university admissions in different ways. But even more important is looking at the suitability of any specific curriculum to the student,” says Conrad Yu, Admissions

Consulting Partner. “The rigor of the program is not without its risks, as some students may not be suited for its many assessments across the diploma, such as the heavy emphasis on writing and analytical skills, and the necessity of developing a broad spectrum of six subjects.”

When it comes to the application process, the experts say that having an in-depth knowledge of schools they are considering, and starting the planning process early is fundamental. “Always start the thinking process early, and things will always go a lot better,” says Ip. “What I mean by the thinking process, is the understanding of your own strength and weaknesses, and the offerings of different schools. Do not ever apply to a school for its ranking because students who do this almost always fail, even when they have top grades. Finally, spend time drafting the college applications and its many essays, preparation makes a huge difference.”

“Navigating the university admissions process can be daunting because of the vast amounts of information available to students and their families now. At The Edge, we want to help our students approach this systematically so that they can make informed decisions, rather than relying on hearsay,” says Yu. “While university admissions may seem like a ‘black box’, we help families understand the process of applications by combining insider knowledge with our extensive experience with all types of students.”

Even after students have settled in a university that fits them well, they still have one last hurdle to overcome—major selection. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, about 80 percent of college students change their major at least once. “I personally do not believe that a teenager should know 100% what they should study in university because with the rapidly changing world, there are new majors coming out every year and there are demands for the next new majors to be created every day,” says Ip. “So, instead of

narrowly trying to select subjects and majors for our students in university, I personally like to look at the strength of the student and decide on what skill sets the student should have in order to survive the real world.”

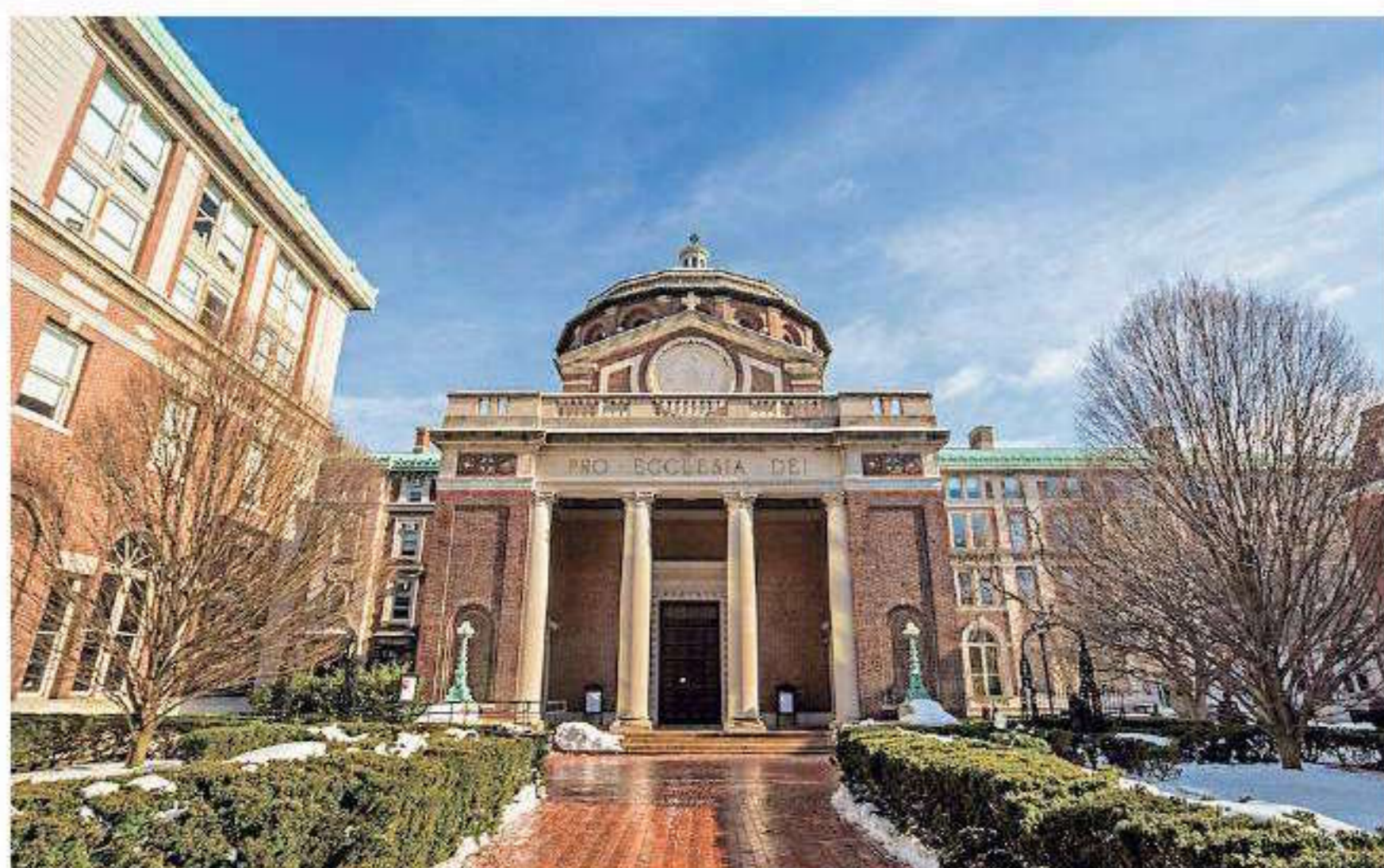
“Don’t be afraid to pursue the things you are genuinely interested in. Increasingly, universities are looking for students who can bring something special to their campus,” says Yu. “Each student has walked down a different path, so the context behind every application is different. Look into what your strengths are, and play to them. There are very few ‘musts’ in college admissions, because colleges want diversity!”



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