



UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS & DEIB

**A PRESENTATION BY
CHARUSHILLA**

OCTOBER 2026



University Admissions assess a number of parameters within a student's journey – academic scores, eligibility tests, activity profile, college essays and letters of recommendation.

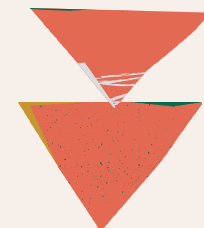
As College Counsellors, our role is to ensure these data points come together cohesively, with balance and within the context of the overarching narrative of every student.





THE CHALLENGE

The context has many dimensions.
D-E-I-B



Universities would like to
support admissions, offer
inclusive curricula, and support
services to one and all. But...



THE CHALLENGES ARE HIGHLY LAYERED



AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

**IMMIGRATION &
POLITICAL RHETORIC**

**FUNDING - INFORMATION
& ACCESS**

EMPLOYABILITY

POST-SECONDARY OUTCOMES

CONFLICT

**MOBILITY & FAMILY
MIGRATION**

**MULTI-CURRICULUM
APPLICATIONS**

**SEN - SUPPORT &
RESOURCES**

UNDERSTANDING THE LANDSCAPE



USA

Three developments reshaped the landscape:

1. The 2023 US Supreme Court decision against race-conscious admissions.
2. Republican-led state legislation targeting DEI offices and training.
3. Federal pressure under the Trump administration beginning in 2025.

The US Department of Education issued guidance in 2025 warning universities receiving federal funding against race-based preferences in admissions, hiring, scholarships, and programming.

As a Result:

- **Many universities have closed or renamed DEI offices.**
- **Diversity statements in faculty hiring are disappearing.**
- **Affinity graduations and race-targeted programmes have been reduced or cancelled.**
- **Institutions are reframing DEI work under broader language such as “student belonging,” “access,” or “engagement.”**

UNDERSTANDING THE LANDSCAPE



THE UNITED KINGDOM

DEIB remains broadly embedded in:

- widening participation agendas,
- student wellbeing,
- disability support,
- access and outreach,
- and attainment-gap initiatives.

The UK debate is less about abolishing DEI offices and more about:

- freedom of speech,
- academic neutrality,
- value-for-money concerns,
- and scepticism toward perceived ideological activism.

The ACS-University-Admissions Officers Report

[REPORT PDF](#)

A sector under pressure

The headlines tell their own story of merger announcements, redundancy programmes, course closures and open speculation about which institution might be the first to fail. The Office for Students¹ has warned explicitly about financial sustainability across the sector. But behind the headlines lies a more varied picture. Not every university is on the edge of disaster with institutions varying hugely in their circumstances and resilience. Yet virtually all are, as one sector leader put it, "paddling very hard underneath the surface" to maintain their position. The structural pressures are sector-wide even if their impact is uneven.

International student fees now account for nearly a quarter of total sector income, 23% according to the most recent HESA data². Home tuition fees, frozen for years in cash terms, have eroded in real value. Training a vet, for example, costs around £20,000 per year but universities receive only £11,000 from fees and

government support. The gap has to be filled from somewhere, and increasingly, that somewhere has been international recruitment. What should be the cherry on the cake has become the flour.

This makes institutions acutely sensitive to any recruitment shortfall. And policy uncertainty, particularly around visas and immigration, has made forward planning extraordinarily difficult.

The changes since 2016 have been dramatic. Brexit removed EU students from home-fee status, triggering steep declines in applications from the continent. The pandemic disrupted international pipelines that took years to build. And from 2024, restrictions on students bringing dependants materially changed the market for taught postgraduate programmes, a segment many universities had come to rely upon.

External factors with largest negative impact

Visa or immigration issues

86%

Affordability or borrowing/debt concerns

77%

Geopolitical instability/International relations

57%

Media coverage of Higher Education

51%

Perceived value of a British university degree

42%

Tough employment market

37%

Perceived value of any university degree

31%

Interest in alternative pathways (e.g. apprenticeships)

29%

Demographic shifts

25%

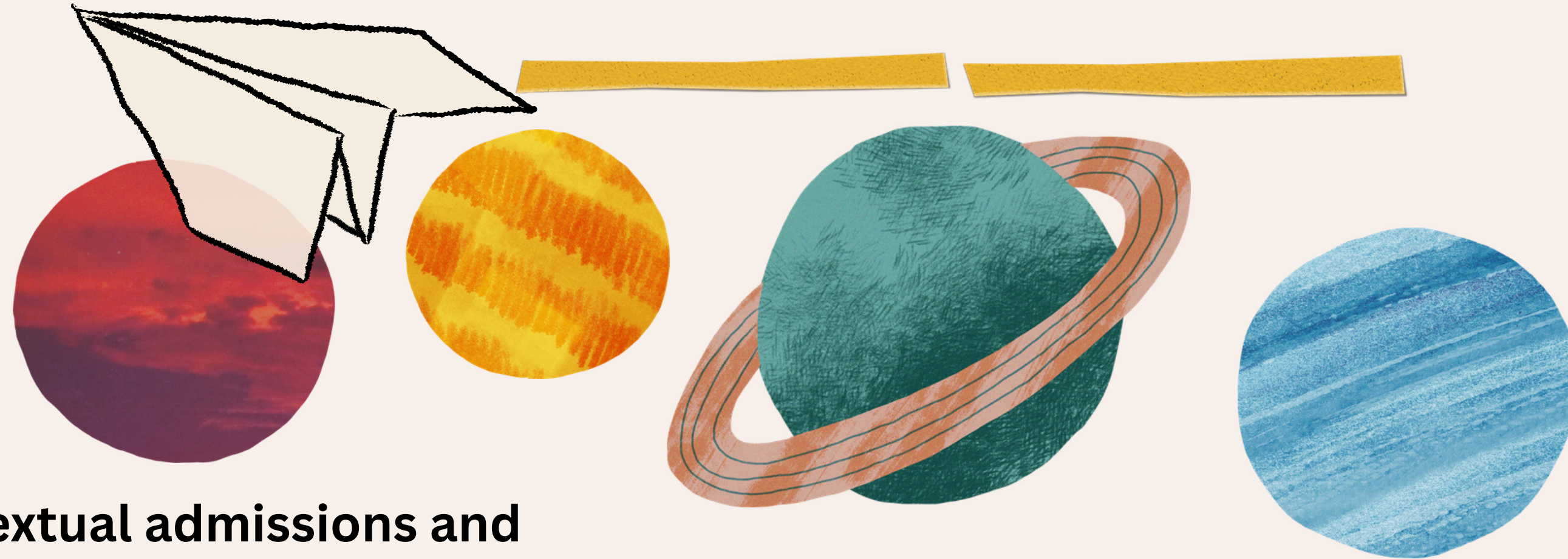
Reduction in loan/grant available

25%

Technological change

8%

INSTITUTIONAL EFFORTS: PRESERVING THE UNDERLYING GOALS



**Contextual admissions and
holistic scholarships**

**Apprenticeships
and diverse learning routes.**

FIRST GENERATION SUPPORT

**Pre-university programs for
disadvantaged students**

**Test score optionality
in selection.**

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STABILITY

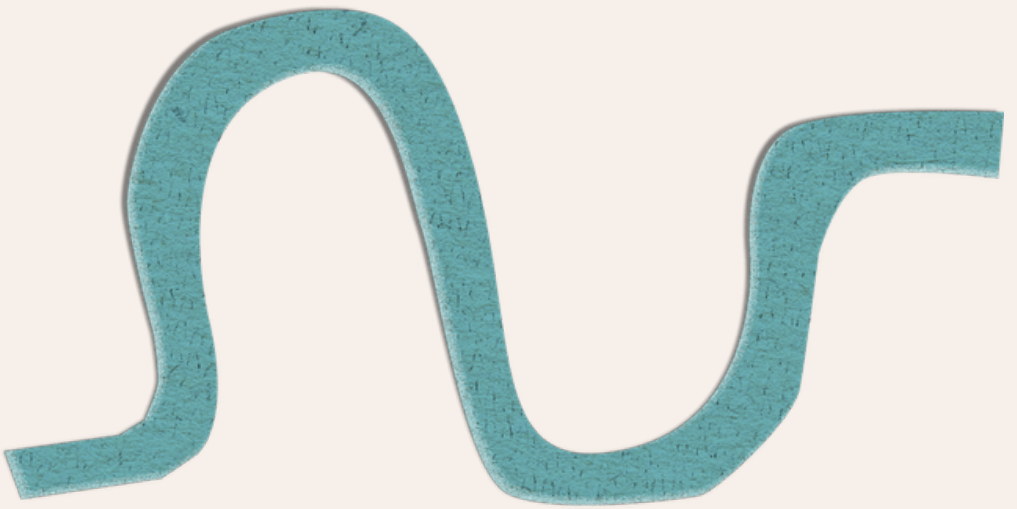
**Digital platforms -
Reverse Admissions**

**Nationality Specific
Scholarships**

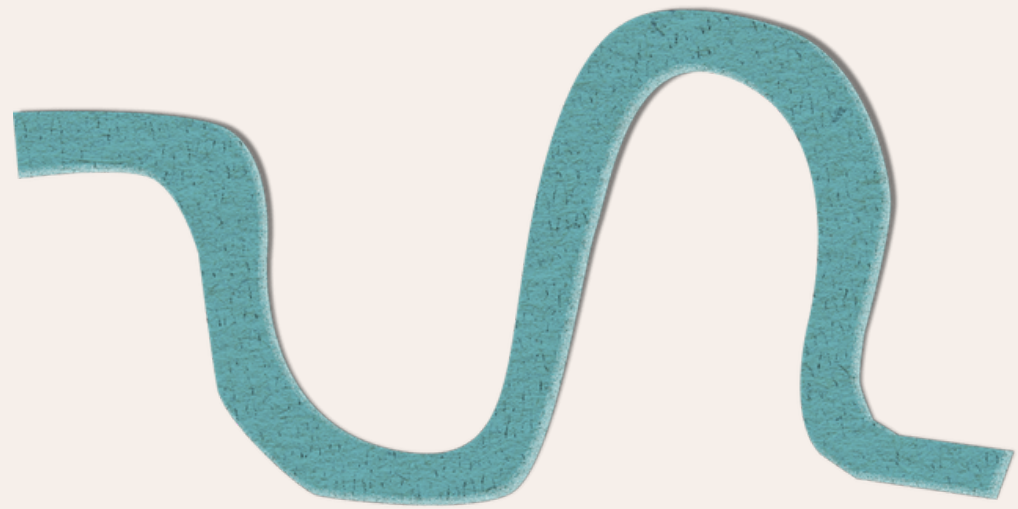
**Need blind admissions
policy for International
students**

International Branch Campuses

FREE RESOURCES



THE ACS STORY



For more than 55 years, ACS International Schools has served the needs of global and local families in Greater London. Three ACS schools educate 2,200 students aged 2-18, both day and boarding, from more than 100 countries. At ACS Cobham:

- 70 nationalities (33% UK, 21% US)
- 22.5% of students receive learning support for Special Educational Needs and English as an Additional Language
- Broadly-selective admissions (based on academic records review, student questionnaire and teacher recommendations)

(Source: ACS School Profile)

TESI

The Equitable Scholarship Initiative

(TESI) at ACS Cobham is a unique opportunity for you to be considered for a selective nomination-based scholarship available at a university of your choice.

Initiated in 2024 for the 2025 admission cycle.



2025

2026

LESTER B. PEARSON SCHOLAR

The Pearson International Student Scholarships cover tuition, books, incidental fees and full residence support for four years at the University of Toronto. Each year no more than 37 students are named Pearson Scholars.

Meet the 2025 Pearson Scholars



Meet the 2025 Pearson Scholar x +

future.utoronto.ca/meet-2025-pearson-scholars

A portrait of Thai Hai An Phung, a young woman with long dark hair and glasses, wearing a white t-shirt. She is standing outdoors in front of a body of water and trees.

Thai Hai An Phung

*ACS International School Cobham
United Kingdom*

Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering, Mechanical Engineering

Hi! My name is Hai An, but I go by Ami. I was born in Vietnam, but I've had the privilege to live in Myanmar, Thailand, Japan, Indonesia, Ukraine, and most recently the UK, where I just graduated from boarding school. Constantly moving allowed me to immerse myself in different cultures, taught me how to adapt quickly, and motivated me to find stability in my education.

In 2022, I was forced to evacuate Ukraine due to the war, and this experience led me to a path for change. At my new school in the UK, I co-founded the Refugee Action Club, where we held guest speakers, raised funds for local refugees, and partnered with a nearby center to offer tutoring for refugee children. I took my passion for change further and joined the Surrey Youth Cabinet, a government organisation under the Surrey County Council. As a member of the environmental branch, I advocated for youth voices in the community bringing sustainable ideas into reality.

CONTEXTUAL ADMISSIONS 2026

BSc Biomedical Sciences



Maya Saraf is a registered young carer with the Action for Carers Surrey. She helps care for her neurodiverse (profoundly autistic) sibling.

SEN SUPPORT

**“I WANT TO STUDY EVERYTHING ABOUT
FILM AND MUSIC.”**

Arun has joined the Film program at the Institute of Achievement and Learning, a programme for students who require more personalised academic support and guidance. Services include:

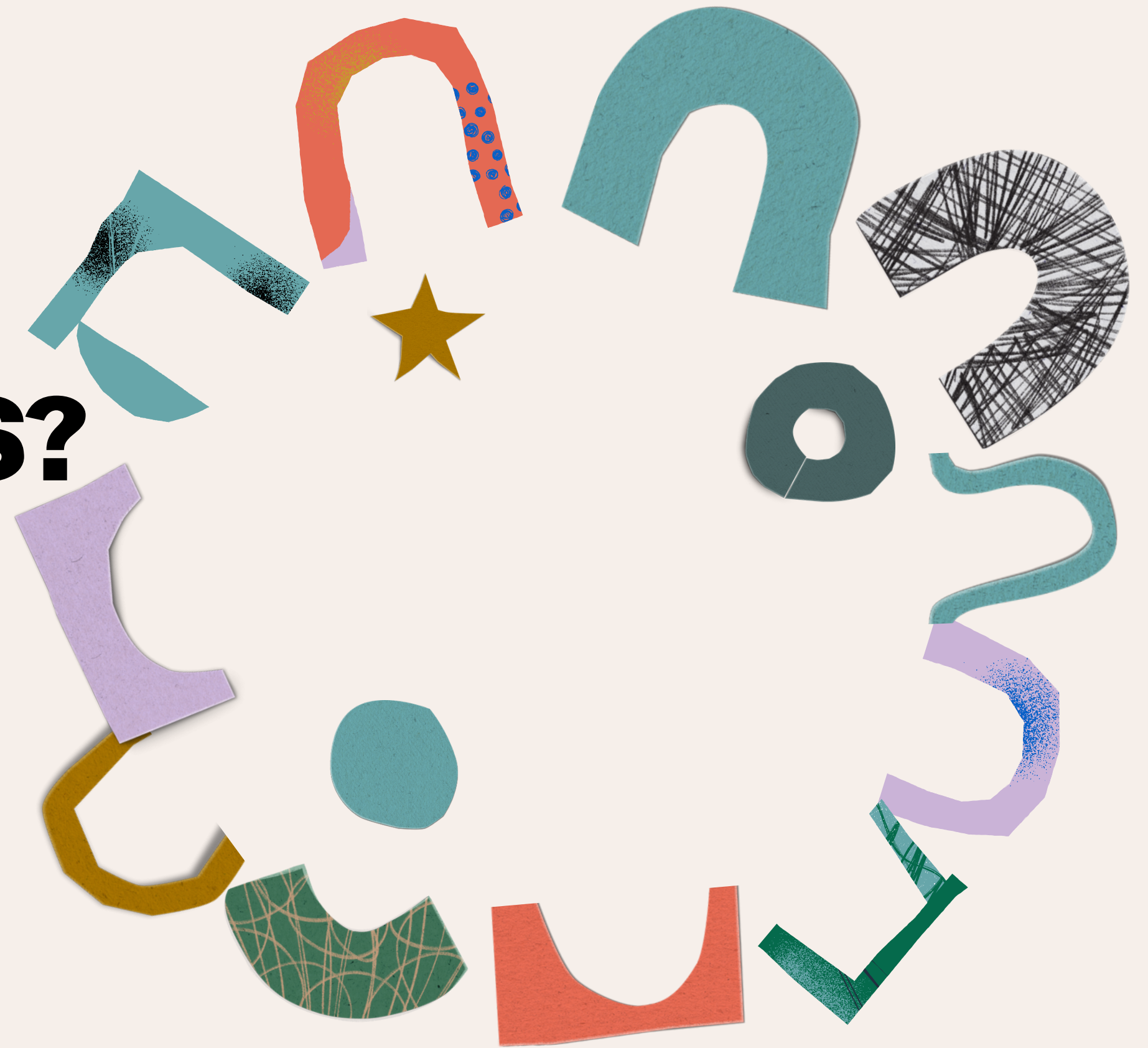
- Academic coaching: Certified academic coaches provide learning strategies that reduce symptoms related to students' deficits in executive functioning.
- Tutoring Centre: tutoring options in a one-on-one setting.
- Assistive technology: Computer software programs to help students increase reading and writing competency.
- Testing Center: the option to take extended-time exams in an alternative testing environment.



Arun-Jit Punater
High School Diploma
SEN Service Level - 2



KNOW ANY MORE SUCCESS STORIES?



THE VISION - Ideas for the community

- Extending the TESI initiative to other schools.
- Collaborating to put together scholarship lists and provisions across the world.
- Developing a directory of SEN students, their post high school journeys as a searchable repository of options.
- Encouraging student agency
- Developing a 'Despite all odds' library of successful admissions achieved
- Expanding college counselling initiatives beyond popular destinations and collating success stories from around the world.
- Integrating DEIB efforts within University Admissions Guidance.



THANK YOU!

