English Transcript for *Academic Qualifications Part 2*

As an admissions officer, you took a good, long, deep look into your academics. Now, let's do the same thing with your testing. We're not talking about how testing is used to make an admission decision. That's going to come later in the course. We're assessing where you stand with your test scores. Now I just want to make one quick note because when it comes to university applications, students are usually most anxious about their test scores. Remember, it's just a test. It's an important factor, but it's not always the most important factor. In fact, there are many US universities that don't require you to submit test scores. We'll talk about them later as well. So, in your training as an admission officer, you have learned that it does not always make a difference if a student submits SAT scores, ACT scores, or both. You've also learned that often, only the highest scores matter. And that the lowest scores in an application are rarely given much attention. As an admission officer, some of your schools may do what's called super score the SAT. This means taking the highest section scores. From each test and combining those to make one high score. So if your critical reading section from October is the highest and your math section score from November. Is the highest math that you have, and your December writing section is the highest. They will take those three pieces from October, November, December, and combine them together to make one super score. Other universities, however, will use your highest single SAT score by date. So, if your total October score was the highest, they'll use October. If your total November score was the highest, they'll use November. The ACT is somewhat different, and the ACT is rarely super scored, because the ACT offers a composite score that incorporates all the pieces of the test. So for the most part, it's the composite score that's going to be used as part of the admissions process. If you have taken the SAT or ACT already, that's great. You know your starting point. If you have not taken either of the tests, you'll want to take a practice test to get an idea of your starting point. College Board, the organization that operates the SAT, offers a full practice test for free on their website. The ACT offers a full paper test that you can download from their website. Both test organizations do offer practice tests through their official test prep materials, but you do have to purchase those. Once you have taken a test, real or practice, what are your scores? What do your scores say about you academic abilities? If you have taken the test more than once, what kind of trends are you seeing? Are your test scores a strength or a weakness? One thing I want to warn you about. Students will come into my office and say, well, I got this on the SAT or ACT but I plan to get this. And you can't really plan to get a certain score on the SAT or the ACT. Such expectations lead to more anxiety, and unfortunately, disappointment. Remember, these tests are meant to be hard. They test skills accumulated through your life. Do some students increase? Absolutely. But you have to be realistic about the chances of your increase, and how much your scores will increase. It's more important to use your current scores to plan. And when your scores go up, we'll think positively, when your scores go up, you can change your plan. Now, let's look at the others you're going to have to take. English language tests. English language tests measure one thing, your English language abilities. Both test organizations, the TOEFL and the IELTS, offer sample questions on their websites, but unfortunately, neither offers a full practice test. Again, you can purchase test prep materials directly from the organization, and you'll be given access to practice tests. But you must purchase those. Much like the ACT or the SAT, you want to know your starting point. So, what are your English language test scores? What do those scores say about your readiness for a U.S. university? Are your English language test scores a strength or are they a weakness? Unlike the SAT and ACT, English

language tests measure one skill that you can improve directly by practice. If your scores are lower than you would like, how far from your target score are they? What can you do to improve your English skills and raise your test scores? Regardless, you have to start by looking at what you have now. Create your plan on your current scores, and again, change your plan when your scores increase. So, as an admissions officer, you have looked at several factors individually. Now, look at them together. Do your grades and test scores match? What might high grades and low test scores say to a university? On the other hand, what might low grades and high test scores say to a university? Academically, what are your strengths? What are your weaknesses? If you were really an admission officer viewing your application, how would you answer that all important first question of, will this student academically succeed? [BLANK_AUDIO]