

# Heathfield School



## Introduction to Higher Education 2015





# Introduction to Higher Education

The time has arrived to start thinking about what you are going to do when you leave Heathfield. You should be researching different courses and discussing them with your tutor, Head of Careers and Director of Sixth Form.

## ***You need to consider:***

- Decisions you make will affect the rest of your life: it is essential that you take them seriously.
- No-one else can make these decisions for you. It is very tempting to try to find a teacher or parent who will say “you ought to do....” and absolve you of the responsibility, but they cannot have the knowledge of your aspirations and preferences that is necessary to ensure that this is wise advice.
- You will find that you sometimes get contradictory advice from different sources. This is inevitable when you are trying to make a complex decision with many factors to take into account and no single criterion for what makes the best outcome, so you will have to consider the reasons given for the advice and evidence provided in order to consider to what extent you can trust the source.

## ***You need to be properly informed.***

- Your main task is to ensure that you have all the information and advice you need to help you make sensible and informed decisions.
- There is plenty of information and advice available in school, from the Higher Education websites, Tutors, Heads of Department and the Careers library, and outside from open days, prospectuses, work experience and so on. Your role is to plan what you need to investigate and ensure that you find time to carry out these plans.
- You need to ask the right questions. When someone advises you what to do, in school or in a book or at a University visit, make sure that they explain clearly the reasons for the advice or where the information comes from.
- If you don't feel that you are getting the advice or information you need, don't wait until it is too late and then grumble. We are always happy to help and you should use this booklet to guide you into making your own choice.

## ***You need to know why you want to go to University.***

- It offers you the chance of further intellectual development. Exploring an academic area in depth can be a source of great fulfilment, both at the time and later in your life.
- A degree is a qualification respected by employers. Many careers are nowadays closed to you or at least much more difficult to enter without a degree and a degree provides you with a certain measure of security. There are unemployed graduates but very few unemployable ones and it is true in general that graduates have greater earning power than non-graduates.

## ***You need to be aware of other possibilities.***

- If you are interested in going to Art School, Music College or Drama School, you should contact Mrs Leibovici, Miss White, Mrs Dance or Mrs O'Connor as soon as possible.

- If you are considering applying to a University abroad, you should check with the Director of Sixth Form as soon as possible to make sure that you are preparing yourself suitably.

See the page on U.S. Universities.

## ART AND DESIGN

It is important that you discuss the options available to you with a member of the Art Department and use the guide: *Art and Design Directory*.

### ***Pre – Degree Foundation Courses***

A level Students

- ♦ Most students need to complete a Pre-degree Art Foundation course before embarking on a degree course. This enables you to build up your portfolio and range of experience and will help you to gain a place on a degree course.
- ♦ Applications for Foundation Courses are made direct to the institution and not through UCAS.
- ♦ If you wish to apply for a degree course directly after A levels, then you must discuss this with Mrs Leibovici first.
- ♦ Portfolios need to show examples from your current work and also indicate progression of ideas. The collation of portfolio material should not be last minute.

### ***The Application Process for Art and Design Courses***

- ♦ Applicants will be able to make up to 5 course choices on their UCAS form.
- ♦ Institutions will need to confirm whether they wish to receive applications by either 15 January **OR** 24 March.
- ♦ UCAS course search and apply will indicate whether a portfolio is required. Applicants should use the Entry Profile on the UCAS website for detailed information regarding what the course is looking for in the portfolios.
- ♦ **SEEK ADVICE FROM YOUR ART TEACHERS !!**

## HIGHER EDUCATION

**Just in case you didn't know .....**

### ***Degree Qualifications:***

There are several types of first degree awards. It will take you 3 – 5 years to get one of these qualifications:

BA	Bachelor of Arts	BSc	Bachelor of Science
BEng	Engineering	MB	Medicine
LLB	Law	HND	Higher National Diploma (2 yrs)

### ***Number of subjects studied?***

**Single subject:** You will concentrate primarily on one subject e.g. BA English, BSc Biology.

**Joint subject:** You will study two separate or related subjects and they will be of equal importance e.g. BA English and History. This is what “and” means.

**Main and Subsidiary:** you will study two subjects which may be completely different, e.g. English with Psychology, Mathematics with Philosophy.

**Combined/Modular:** You will study a combination of subjects as major, minor and subsidiary pathways. Good examples include degree courses at Oxford Brookes, Durham and Newcastle.

**ERASMUS:** Many courses offer up to a year of study in the EU under the Erasmus scheme. Find out which institutions offer these courses at [www.britishcouncil.org/erasmus.htm](http://www.britishcouncil.org/erasmus.htm)

**The degree could be:**

### **Academic**

Subjects studied for their own value e.g. History, English, Chemistry. Did you know that 40% of graduate jobs are open to graduates of any discipline?

### **Vocational**

An essential qualification for certain careers e.g. Engineering, Medicine, Architecture.  
**Remember to apply for Nursing through UCAS.**

### **Semi-Vocational**

Can prepare graduates for a variety of careers e.g. Law, Business, Accounting

### **BTEC Higher National Diploma (HND)**

Two years in length. Career related. You can transfer to a degree course after the first or second year. Some Universities and Colleges run a common first year for HND and degree course students so that students can progress on to whichever course seems more appropriate in the second year.

### **Foundation Degrees**

Foundation degrees are an intermediate, work-related higher education qualification. A full time course takes two years and, on completion, there is the opportunity to progress to a Full Honours Degree with just a further 12 – 15 months full time study.

### **UCAS TARIFF**

#### **How does the points score system work?**

Whilst some universities require specific A levels and, in some cases, AS subjects and the grades to meet the requirements, others stipulate UCAS tariff points.

The following will help you to understand some of the principles on which the Tariff will work:

- Points scores can be added from different qualifications, e.g. GCE A level or Advanced Subsidiary. (AS).
- A level: Grade A\* = 140pts; A = 120 pts; B = 100 pts; C = 80 pts;
- D = 60 pts; E = 40 pts.
- AS levels: Grade A = 60 pts; B = 50pts; C = 40 pts; D = 30 pts; E = 20 pts.

- The A\* was introduced for A level in 2010 and is dependent on gaining over 90% in both A2 modules. It is equivalent to 140 UCAS points. Some universities are using this grade when making offers.
- There is no ceiling to the number of points which can be accumulated, thereby recognising the full breadth and depth of students' achievements.
- AS scores will be replaced by A level scores in the same subjects.

## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

- The minimum offer for a degree course is two 'E' grades and for an HND one 'E' grade. However, **most offers are very much higher**. The maximum offer could be three A\* grades/420 points. The grades demanded are linked to the popularity of the course or the University and in some cases the difficulty of the subject content. **You should have an idea of your predicted grades after your AS results.**
- Entry requirements and conditional offers expressed as points scores will often be qualified to require a minimum level of depth, for example, two A level passes and/or achievement in a specified subject, e.g. 100 points or grade B in Mathematics A level, or to exclude any qualifications which cannot be counted in fulfilment of the requirement.
- Many universities now stipulate 3 A levels and one stand-alone AS.

## THE APPLICATION

Competition for certain courses is becoming quite fierce and many universities have introduced pre-selection tests such as LNAT and BMAT. Some reserve the right to ask for the AS module results even though they have not been 'cashed-in'. In future this will probably extend to stating the dates the AS modules were taken and number of times they were sat. This policy does highlight the importance of not re-sitting AS units and, therefore, the need to try and 'get it right' the first time.

Cambridge have stated that their standard offer to applicants for science courses for 2015 will be two A\* and an A, with A\*AA for arts subjects. Some degree courses at Oxford, as well as other top universities, are also changing their entrance requirements to include one or more A\* grades.

Before applying, you need to check that you have, or are likely to achieve, the right grades at the right level and in the right subjects for the course you have chosen.

## APPLYING TO OXBRIDGE

You can only apply to Oxford or Cambridge. You should then include 4 other University choices on the UCAS form. Entries for Oxford and Cambridge, and for Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine, must be in by 15 October. UCAS will accept applications from 1 September.

You should discuss your intentions of applying for Oxbridge early on in the Lower Sixth, with your subject teachers and Year Head and tutor.

### **For Oxford:**

You may need to submit 2 essays/pieces of AS/or A2 work of a very high calibre by November of the Upper Sixth year. As part of the interview and selection process you may be required to complete a written test on the day. This often applies to subjects that involve number – i.e. Engineering, Maths, Computer Science or subjects that are non A level, such as Psychology or Law.

For Medicine and Veterinary Science, History, Law and English, a series of tests known as BMAT, HAT, LNAT and ELAT were introduced in 2004. These form an additional part of the selection process. Candidates must ensure that they have registered for the required test early in September. Based on the result, you may or may not be called for interview.

**NB. Other universities are also introducing these tests – make sure you check the prospectuses**

### **For Cambridge:**

Some colleges ask for grade 1 or 2 in STEP papers (Sixth Term Entrance Papers), taken along with A levels, in the entry subject. A number of Colleges are currently using the **Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA)** to assess applicants.

Both universities ask students to attend demanding interviews based on their entry subjects. Oxford interviews are in the first two weeks in December, whilst Cambridge interviews usually take place in the first three weeks of December, so we strongly recommend that you don't make any unbreakable commitments for this time.

\*STEP papers are sometimes required for courses at Warwick.

## **U. S. UNIVERSITIES**

While most of our students choose to study at British Universities, some students prefer to apply to American Universities and Colleges.

Their application system is very different since there is no UCAS system. Therefore, a separate application must be made to each university chosen. It is best to apply to no more than 6 U.S. universities: 2 higher than the target level, 2 at target level and 2 slightly lower than target as insurance offers. The form filling and general application is very time consuming and to apply to more than 6 universities could be detrimental to A level studies.

It should be pointed out that entry to U.S. Universities is no easy option.

Most institutions require high SAT 1 and/or SAT 2 scores achieved prior to entry. (If there are sufficient numbers of students interested in applying to the USA we can arrange SAT 1 tuition on a private basis in the Lower Sixth or in the Upper Sixth.)

Entries are required in the U.S. by 1 January, so all forms must be completed by mid-November to allow time for schools to complete their sections and post before Christmas.

Applicants must be responsible for entering the SAT tests and obtaining and completing the numerous application forms. Forms can be downloaded or obtained from the individual university websites. The Fulbright Commission in London is the official source of information on applying to American universities: [www.fulbright.co.uk](http://www.fulbright.co.uk)

## GAP YEAR

The primary responsibility for arranging a Year Out rests with the pupils and their parents.

### Pros

- ◆ You'll be more confident and mature when you start at University or in employment;
- ◆ You can have a total break from academic study;
- ◆ It's a chance to see the world and broaden your outlook;
- ◆ You can save money for university;
- ◆ You can gain relevant work experience;
- ◆ You can gain extra skills and qualifications now.

### Cons

- ◆ You will be a year behind your peers when you start work or university;
- ◆ You might lose academic momentum and get rusty, especially if you study a Mathematical subject;
- ◆ It needs careful planning so that you do not waste the year;
- ◆ Going abroad may cost a lot;
- ◆ Even taking 1 year out can deter some universities from offering places. Edinburgh University for example is reluctant to offer deferred places.

- ◆ If you wish to take a Gap Year before going to university, then apply for deferred entry in 2016.
- ◆ Indicate your Gap Year plans in the Personal Statement section of the UCAS form.
- ◆ Check with the Admissions Tutors of your chosen universities that a Gap Year is acceptable.
- ◆ If you are unsure about whether you want to take a year out, then apply for entry in the year 2015 and then contact the university later if you decide to defer entry, giving a good reason.
- ◆ Alternatively, complete your A levels and then apply after you have left Heathfield. However, this can cause problems if you decide to go abroad before December.
- ◆ Applying this year means you have the security of obtaining a place and you can make full use of the advice available in school. There is no problem if you then decide to defer or pull out altogether and re-apply next year.
- ◆ **Want More Information about Gap Year activities?** There are lots of books and information about specific programmes in the Careers Library.
- ◆ The following websites could also help:

[www.yearoutgroup.org](http://www.yearoutgroup.org) - lists registered organisations

[www.gapyear.com](http://www.gapyear.com) – a huge resource of gap year information

[www.gapadvice.org](http://www.gapadvice.org) – how to plan for a safe trip

- ◆ **Worldwide Volunteering** – comprehensive information about organisations in the UK, Europe and worldwide – [www.worldwidevolunteering.org.uk](http://www.worldwidevolunteering.org.uk)
- ◆ **Camp America** – [www.campamerica.co.uk](http://www.campamerica.co.uk)
- ◆ **BUNAC** – work or volunteer abroad – [www.bunac.org/yog](http://www.bunac.org/yog)
- ◆ **British Trust for Conservation** – organise volunteers to carry out a wide range of conservation tasks - [www.btcv.org](http://www.btcv.org)
- ◆ **The Year in Industry** – open to students who have secured an offer of a place on a degree course. You can work for a firm and earn up to £17,000 p.a. They offer placements for



students interested in engineering, science, IT, business, finance and marketing - [www.yini.org.uk](http://www.yini.org.uk)

- ◆ **Lattitude Global Volunteering** (formerly Gap Activity Projects) is a charity specialising in international volunteering – [www.lattitude.org.uk](http://www.lattitude.org.uk)
- ◆ **Raleigh International** – offer challenging expeditions and community projects - [www.raleighinternational.org.uk](http://www.raleighinternational.org.uk)
- ◆ **Africa and Asia Venture** – most placements involve teaching and sports coaching in schools or community, conservation and environmental projects – [www.aventure.co.uk](http://www.aventure.co.uk)
- ◆ **Art History Abroad** – offer many art history courses in Italy – [www.arthistoryabroad.com](http://www.arthistoryabroad.com)

## EMPLOYMENT - WORK EXPERIENCE IN GAP YEAR OR HOLIDAYS

### *What do you need to do?*

Make sure that you have:

- ◆ **An updated CV** so that it can be easily adapted to suit a particular job application or be used in response to your changing circumstances.
- ◆ **A specimen letter of application.** Again keep a copy so that it can easily be altered or updated.
- ◆ **A copy of your personal statement**, accessible on computer so that it can be adjusted easily.

When you apply for jobs make sure that you:

- ◆ Take a photocopy of the application form to practise on;
- ◆ Fill in the final form neatly and preferably in black ink ... easier to photocopy;
- ◆ Keep a copy of your application form and other details about the job;
- ◆ Read these through before you go for interview;
- ◆ Telephone to check that your application form has arrived;
- ◆ Try to arrange a mock interview;
- ◆ Respond quickly to any requests from the organisation that you are seeking to join;
- ◆ Find out the name of the person dealing with your application, then direct letters and telephone calls accordingly;
- ◆ Find out as much as you can about the organisation you have applied to;
- ◆ Have ready a couple of questions to ask at interview in case you are given the opportunity to ask them;
- ◆ Seek feedback after an interview, particularly if you are unsuccessful. There could be some good tips for the future!

### **Sources of Information:**

[www.work-experience.org](http://www.work-experience.org) - This organisation promotes and supports quality work experience.

[www.careers-gateway.co.uk](http://www.careers-gateway.co.uk) – An A-Z of jobs with links to other UK web sites, including professional bodies, education and training. There is also good information on applying for jobs.

### Don't forget:

- ◆ The Employment Agencies
- ◆ Resource material in Careers Library
- ◆ Newspapers
- ◆ Specialist magazines
- ◆ The Job Centre
- ◆ Personal Contacts

***Remember – one of your best chances of a job is through a personal contact, so make sure you talk to friends and neighbours and keep your ears open!***

## OTHER COURSES

Some students may not wish to consider university or college. However, there is much that can and should be undertaken at this stage to explore options. The Careers Library offers a variety of different resources to help you identify your choices. Now is the time to discuss these with your tutor, Head of Careers and Director of Sixth Form. Several students have enrolled with Quest Professional (Training and Recruiting for Business [www.questprofessional.co.uk](http://www.questprofessional.co.uk)), as well as Oxford Media and Business School ([www.oxfordbusiness.co.uk](http://www.oxfordbusiness.co.uk)). For those who may wish to extend their language and cultural experience, there are numerous organisations, such as John Hall in Venice or Florence. Useful websites: [www.unisnotforme.com](http://www.unisnotforme.com) and [www.notgoingtouni.co.uk](http://www.notgoingtouni.co.uk)

## HOW TO WRITE YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

Whether your next step is Higher Education or employment, you will need to write a **personal statement** in support of your application for a job or course. Most students find this task very difficult. You have to “sell” yourself on paper and the chances are that you have not done this before. It is not just academic qualifications that count. The things you do in your spare time, such as travel or work experience, are also relevant. ***It is a very individual piece of writing that only you can do!***

If you are asked to attend an interview, the personal statement could well be a focus for discussion. It might sound very academic to say that you love reading, but make sure that you are able to give examples of books you have read recently, along with your favourite writers.

About two-thirds of the personal statement should cover reasons for your choice of course. You should also include details of activities that you have participated in, both inside and outside school, any positions of responsibility you have held and what you might be interested in doing in the future. You must make sure that your statement is coherent and logical. It will seem odd if you apply for a course that involves sport and yet do not include any sports among your spare-time activities.

Admissions tutors receive a huge pile of application forms. Each applicant will, broadly speaking, offer the same sort of qualifications. For this reason, you need to make your application sound interesting. Include details which will make them want to interview you.

Ask your Personal Tutor or one of your subject teachers to look through a rough draft of your final statement before you see the Director of Sixth Form who will do a final check before you apply online.

If you decide to take a year "out", you will have to give your reasons for deferring entry or the start of a planned career and outline the plans you have for the year. Again, you should check that the Higher Education institutions you are applying to will accept a deferred entry.

## SEVEN GOLDEN RULES

1. **Explain why you want to do the course.** As a rule of thumb roughly two-thirds of your statement should be used for this and the rest for your other interests and achievements.
2. **Your statement is a piece of persuasive writing.** It should be logical and read like an argument in support of your application. You need to show how subject interests, hobbies and career aspirations all fit together to make you suitable for the course.
3. **It must be well written.** It is particularly important that you display your competence with language if you are applying for a course which involves essay writing. This may be the most important mini essay that you have written to date. **Several drafts will be needed and must be shown to your Tutor before the final version is ready.**
4. **The opening sentence is the most important one.** "I have applied to do this course because ....." "My interest in ..... was first aroused by ....." Try not to use the word "I" too often.
5. For vocational courses, universities will want to see what you have done to help others; work experience is very important.
6. **Avoid generalisations.** Give evidence which supports your statements.

### For example:

- ◆ Instead of saying 'I enjoy Chemistry' explain that you have '*enjoyed researching the industrial implications of by-products to standard chemical processes such as .....*' Mention which books or journals you have used to find out this information.
  - ◆ Explain which particular aspects of your subjects have influenced your choice of course.
  - ◆ If you mention reading as a hobby, refer to specific books that you have enjoyed and could talk about. Have you a favourite author? Period? Theme?
  - ◆ Have field work, other courses or work experience influenced your choice and, if so, how?
7. **Don't feel that you have to cover all of the areas suggested in the UCAS notes to applicants.**

### For example:

- ◆ Don't list positions of responsibility or events from the distant past which now seem trivial. If they seem trivial to you, how will they sound to an Admissions Tutor or, if you have to talk about them, to an interviewer?
- ◆ Don't mention career interests if you really have no idea. However, it might be worth mentioning particular areas if they tie in well with your chosen course.

## WHEN TO START?

The sooner you submit your university application to UCAS the better. It is best to have submitted your application by the October half term or sooner to ensure you enter the system earlier. By applying early, not only will you receive offers sooner but also you will be able to concentrate on your studies, thus removing considerable pressure.

## PLAGIARISM

UCAS have issued stern warnings about plagiarism – they have sophisticated screening systems that can identify ‘copied’ material. An incident that they detect will mean that universities are notified and this may affect your application, with disqualification being the likely outcome. Universities are aware of professionally written personal statements and do not look favourably on these.

## New Developments to the UCAS process

UCAS is constantly updating the application process – please check the website regularly for the latest advice.

## UCAS Extra

This option is available to students who have either not received offers from their 5 chosen universities and wish to make an additional application **OR** for students who have changed their course options. This is available from March till June. Think carefully before declining any of your original offers.

## CLEARING

For those students who do not meet the required grades for either their confirmed or insurance university, they can enter into ‘Clearing’. This system allows their application to be considered by universities where there are spaces.

**Adjustment period at Clearing:** This new initiative is for those students who have performed better than expected. It allows them to ‘shop around’ for a better or preferred course or university. The Adjustment process is available from A level results day until 31 August.

## SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Where your application involves special circumstances, it might be a good idea to discuss the matter with your tutor and/or teachers. Some common examples are as follows: dyslexia, illness, recent bereavement.

**Relevant qualifications:** check carefully that you meet the GCSE entry requirements as well as studying the correct A levels, e.g. Psychology often requires at least a grade B in GCSE Maths. All teaching courses need GCSE passes in English, Mathematics and Science. Usually, Medics must have A level Chemistry and Biology, with grades such as AAA. You need to check the A level entry requirements very carefully regarding grades and subjects – Russell Group universities offer clear recommendations on the combination of A Levels which would give the candidate the best grounding for a particular course.

### 1. Joint Degrees

Try to show an interest not only in each subject but in how the subjects relate to each other, e.g. Business Studies and Law - a language might support the study of both these at University.

2. **If you are applying for a subject which you have not studied before try to show that:**

You understand what it involves;  
You have the potential to enjoy it as well as cope with it;  
Where possible, relate your current subjects and the skills acquired in these to the degree course, e.g. Maths and Physics for Engineering, English and History for American Studies or Law.

3. **If you are applying for a Vocational course (e.g. Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Accountancy, Law) show that you have made an informed choice.**

- ◆ Are you aware of what the work involves?
- ◆ Have you done any relevant work experience or job shadowing?
- ◆ Have you read any books on the subject or spoken to practitioners?
- ◆ Does your personal statement show real commitment?

4. **Have you applied for several Courses that are very different?**

- ◆ You need to be careful.

Can you explain the rationale behind your choices? If you can't do this, then it is unlikely that an Admissions tutor will be able to do so. It could well be taken as a justification for putting your application on the 'reject' pile.

- ◆ If there is a common theme running through the range of courses for which you have applied, then draw attention to this.

5. **A Gap Year?**

- ◆ Explain why you want to take one and what you intend to do with it.
- ◆ It is obviously impressive if this links in with your degree choice, e.g. working in a Solicitor's firm before embarking on a Law degree or teaching Science in a Third World country before doing a Maths degree.
- ◆ Have you checked that the University department looks on it favourably?

**Useful Vocabulary**

**Skills Learned:**

Working independently, working in a team, solving problems, giving presentations, good organisation, planning, co-operation, argument, leadership, time management.

**Experiences:**

Enjoy, gain from, contribute to, participate, encourage, interest, improve, progress, opportunity, involved, show initiative, create, enthusiasm.

**Personal Qualities:**

Responsible, self-motivated, flexible, determined, keen, ability, capable, persevere. Avoid the word love.

## RESEARCH

**Resources for Higher Education:** Your Centigrade Report will have provided a starting point for your personal research into higher education courses.

- ◆ [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) – everything you need to know about courses, institutions and the UCAS process.

Make sure you read the course **Entry Profiles** as they are written and supplied by university staff. Each Entry Profile gives:

- Details of the course
  - Entry requirements
  - Description of the type of candidate sought for each course
  - List of qualities, interests and experiences that will help a student succeed – such information will help you to decide what to include in your personal statement
- ◆ University websites – your chance to explore university campuses around the country – directly on the University website or through the UCAS website. Usually [www.\(uni name\).ac.uk](http://www.(uni name).ac.uk). e.g. Imperial College is [www.ic.ac.uk](http://www.ic.ac.uk), Reading is [www.reading.ac.uk](http://www.reading.ac.uk).
  - ◆ [www.qaa.ac.uk/students](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/students) - Looking for independent information to help you choose your course? QAA reviews and reports on all universities and colleges of higher education.
  - ◆ [www.hero.ac.uk](http://www.hero.ac.uk) – Informative university profiles.
  - ◆ [www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life\\_and\\_style/education/good\\_university\\_guide](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/education/good_university_guide) - The Times league tables of different subjects and universities for subscribers.
  - ◆ [www.guardian.co.uk/education/universityguide](http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/universityguide) - Guardian university guide for subject and university league tables.
  - ◆ [www.guardian.co.uk/education/rae](http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/rae) - **RAE 2008 Results** by subject and institution. Research Assessment Exercise – universities assessed according to the quality of their research.

### Books available in the library:

- ◆ **Degree Course Offers**
- ◆ **The Times Good University Guide**
- ◆ **The Guardian University Guide**
- ◆ **Personal Statements: How to write a Personal Statement**
- ◆ **Prospectuses** – Use library copies or request your own copies
- ◆ **Ask Mrs Bramley for reading lists – subject specific and general**

## OPEN DAYS:

- ◆ A full list of open days can be found on UCAS or University websites.
- ◆ Try to visit the institutions to which you intend to apply in the holidays and go with your parents. When you apply to a specific university you will be invited to an Open Day if you have been made an offer.
- ◆ If visiting an area with a university, then pop in and have a look around. You do not have to wait for a designated Open Day.

## Taster Courses

A number of universities and colleges offer short 'taster' courses, giving you the opportunity to experience academic and social life. Demonstrating your commitment to a course, or to a university/college in this way will look good on your Personal Statement.

- ◆ **HEADSTART** offer four-day residential courses at major universities for Science and Engineering – [www.headstart.org.uk](http://www.headstart.org.uk)
- ◆ **WORKSHOP CONFERENCES** offer courses on Law, Psychology, Medicine, Veterinary Science, Physiotherapy and Business – [www.workshop-uk.com](http://www.workshop-uk.com)
- ◆ **LONDON TASTER PROGRAMME** covers courses in a range of subjects within the Arts & Humanities, Business & Computing, Engineering, Language & Culture, Medicine & Medical Related courses, Sciences & Social Sciences – [www.london.ac.uk/tasters](http://www.london.ac.uk/tasters)
- ◆ **ISCO Careers Courses & Events** offer the opportunity to experience the nature of the work or study undertaken in various occupations or subject areas – [www.myfuturewise.org.uk/events](http://www.myfuturewise.org.uk/events)

## COST OF APPLYING TO HIGHER EDUCATION

### England

#### Tuition Fees

The annual tuition fee for UK/EU students is currently £9,000 at most universities. The government will continue to loan students the money for fees. Students will repay these loans once they have left university and are earning over £21,000 a year. The rate at which you repay the fees will be linked to your income. For further details visit the Student Finance England at [www.gov.uk/student-finance](http://www.gov.uk/student-finance).

#### Grants, Bursaries and Scholarships

Students from lower income households will be eligible for some financial support. The UCAS website ([www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)), as well as individual university website, will show course fees, as well as further information about bursaries and scholarships offered. Many of these are set to be very generous. Please check the universities' websites regularly for up-to-date information regarding bursaries and scholarships.

## **Living Costs**

The amount you need will depend on your own particular lifestyle! However, you obviously need money for accommodation, food, travel, clothes, study materials and leisure activities. For example, students at Bristol University spend something in the region of £7,000 to £9,500 a year on their living expenses, including accommodation. Student loans to help with living costs are available which attract a very low rate of interest. Since Spring 2009, new entrants into Higher Education who are resident in England have had their applications for loans and grants administered by Student Finance England. You will be able to apply online for your student support at [www.gov.uk/student-finance](http://www.gov.uk/student-finance)

Eligible students will be able to get 75% of the maximum loan whatever income they or their family have.

## **Scotland**

Arrangements for students living in Scotland are different to the rest of the UK and for further details you should visit the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) website at [www.saas.gov.uk](http://www.saas.gov.uk). If you live in Scotland and are starting a full-time higher education course at a Scottish university, you will pay tuition fees of £1,820. However, Scottish students who choose to study elsewhere in the UK are liable for an income-assessed contribution to the fees charged by the individual universities. Students from other parts of the UK wishing to study in Scotland will have to pay tuition fees of up to £9,000. There may be a separate, higher tuition fee level set for medical students. Standard degree courses in Scotland last four years compared to three years elsewhere.

## **Wales**

For latest information, see [www.studentfinancewales.co.uk](http://www.studentfinancewales.co.uk)

## **International Students**

Overseas fees can range from £7,000 to £19,000 per year, depending on the institution, the level and type of course. UKCOSA (The Council for International Education) has a useful section on its website [www.ukcosa.org.uk](http://www.ukcosa.org.uk) concerning financial aid and sources of funding. Information can also be obtained from the British Council's website at [www.educationuk.org](http://www.educationuk.org)



## TIMETABLE FOR UNIVERSITY APPLICATIONS

AUTUMN TERM 2013 EASTER TERM 2014	Start thinking about course/university/college. Talk to teachers/tutors/Head of Careers/Director of Sixth Form. Investigate UCAS Website – <a href="http://www.ucas.com">www.ucas.com</a> Take Centigrade test. Introductory talk about Higher Education.
EASTER HOLIDAY/ SUMMER TERM 2014	Continue with research into courses and universities. Open Day visits, <u>if not jeopardising AS/A2 studies.</u> Register with UCAS Apply – start completing form. Complete Extended Essay.
SUMMER HOLIDAY 2014	Obtain work experience if you can. Finalise your choices. Complete personal statement. Register and take UKCAT (Medicine), LNAT, BMAT, ELAT.
AUTUMN TERM 2014	From the start of this term students should continue UCAS Apply.
30 SEPTEMBER 2014	Heathfield deadline for those students applying to either Oxford or Cambridge. Deadline for all applications for Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Studies.
7 OCTOBER 2014	Heathfield deadline for those students applying for English, Drama, Law, History and Geography.
14 OCTOBER 2014	Heathfield deadline for all other UCAS Apply.
MID NOVEMBER 2014	Oxford and Cambridge applicants may be required to send some A level written work (essays or lab.work) to their chosen College by this date. Mock Interviews.
DECEMBER 2014	Oxford and Cambridge interviews held. Note, however, that post A Level applicants may have been interviewed earlier in the term. Some early applicants to other universities may also be interviewed or offered places.
JANUARY 2015	Oxford and Cambridge applicants receive notification about their applications: conditional offer, or rejection. Post A level applicants will receive unconditional offer or rejection.
SPRING 2015	Applicants continue to hear from universities; interview dates, offers and rejections are received. Complete Student Loans application – see <a href="http://www.gov.uk/student-finance">www.gov.uk/student-finance</a>
LATE MARCH 2015	You should have heard from all of your university choices by now.
LATE APRIL/EARLY MAY 2015	Deadline for informing UCAS which universities are your 'firm' and 'insurance' choices. You will be informed by UCAS about the precise date by which your replies must be given. <u>If you do not meet this deadline you risk losing all your offers.</u>
13 AUGUST 2015 (This is correct to the best of my knowledge at this time)	Publication of A and AS level results. <u>Do not be away on holiday – you must deal with problems yourself.</u> Confirmation or otherwise of university places. Help and advice is available through the school. 'Clearing' starts.

## My Degree Course

## Visit

Is the Syllabus interesting?				
Is the course directly relevant to particular career fields?				
Is the course accredited by professional institutions?				
Are my examination subjects acceptable for entry?				
What grades are usually required?				
Is the course modular or non-modular?				
Does Credit Accumulation Transfer apply?				
Are all candidates interviewed before places are offered?				
What is the average intake of students each year?				
How many students are in the Department?				
What is the female/male ratio?				
What is the proportion of mature students?				
Will I be at a disadvantage if I apply for deferred entry?				
Is a gap year accepted – or encouraged?				
Will I be able to study part of the course in Europe?				
How is the course taught?				
Are appropriate study skills taught?				
Will I be encouraged to develop transferable skills?				
Will I be able to practise modern language skills?				
Are the information technology facilities suitable?				
Will I have access to the IT facilities I need?				
Are IT and study facilities restricted to daytime access?				
Is there a programme of active links with employers?				
Are industrial placements arranged?				
How will I be assessed during the course?				
Does the department appear well-equipped?				
Is the department likely to change in the near future?				
What do present students think of the course?				
Are current students assigned to first-year students?				
How is the department seen nationally/internationally?				
Are industrial sponsorships available?				
<b>GENERAL IMPRESSIONS AND INFORMATION</b>				
Do I like the location and the local facilities?				

Do I like the look of campus?				
Are first-year students guaranteed accommodation?				
Does accommodation have to be shared?				
What is the accommodation like?				
Is there suitable off-campus accommodation nearby?				
Is there a Student Accommodation Service?				
What student medical services are available?				
What other student welfare facilities are provided?				
How much will I need for books and equipment?				
Can I keep a vehicle on campus?				
What are the vehicle parking and security facilities?				
How good are the public transport links?				
How good are hall/campus catering facilities?				
What do present students think about the facilities?				
Are there suitable shopping facilities on campus?				
Is personal safety reasonably assured on campus?				
<b>OTHER ACTIVITIES</b>				
What clubs and societies are available?				
Are my sporting and social interests well catered for?				
Is there a student newspaper or broadcasting station?				
How active is the Students' Union?				
Are there active links with international universities?				
<b>CAREERS COUNSELLING</b>				
How do graduates from this course start their careers?				
How easily do they usually find first employment ?				
What career opportunities could be available?				
Are there postgraduate study opportunities?				
What help is given by the Careers Advisory Service?				
Is the careers centre well-equipped?				
Are there good links with employers?				
Which employers regularly visit this institution?				
Which employers regularly recruit from this course?				