



# **Applying for Apprenticeships**

## **Applying to University**

### **An Essential Guide for Parents and Students**

**June 2018**

# **Applying for Apprenticeships or to University.**

## **Information for Year 12 students and parents.**

This booklet is designed to help you all work your way through the university application process as well as providing information relating to apprenticeships.

The information in this booklet reinforces the work undertaken in PSRE lessons and assemblies.

### **Initial student research.**

It is most important that students do a lot of research before they make any decisions about which universities they want to apply to. There are over 300 institutions offering university degree courses and students can only apply to 5 at most, so thorough research is essential.

- ❖ The best starting place is the UCAS website - [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com).

For students who are unclear about a future career, the UCAS site has a helpful section on "Careers" which they can explore.

### **Apprenticeships**

Students should now have signed up to the government apprenticeship site. Additionally, I recommend that students use the UCAS website where there is a great deal of information for students interested in all types of apprenticeships.

### **The UCAS website.**

UCAS is the organisation responsible for managing applications to higher education (HE) courses in the UK. The UCAS website is one of the most popular websites in the UK; it has a comprehensive online database of over 50,000 HE courses at more than 300 universities and colleges that are members of UCAS. The courses have what are known as "entry profiles", which give extra information, such as: the content of the course; who it might be suitable for; what the entry requirements are; how it is assessed; potential career opportunities and student satisfaction. All course details (including information on fees, bursaries

and financial support) are supplied directly by the universities and colleges themselves and are updated daily.

### **What now?**

Between now and the start of next term students should research courses and universities looking at every aspect possible - course suitability with personal interests, likely entry grades required - do these match the students' real ability?, bursaries and scholarships available, location, accommodation options, extra-curricular activities and so on. All of this information can be found easily using the UCAS website.

### **UCAS Parent Newsletters**

I strongly recommend that you sign up for the Parent Newsletters, on the UCAS website, which offer plenty of advice to support your son.

### **University League Tables.**

There are 2 websites which we use with the students to help them compare universities they are considering. These are <https://unistats.direct.gov.uk> and [www.university.which.co.uk](http://www.university.which.co.uk). These have proved very useful and are extremely easy to use.

### **Key facts.**

By the start of next term, Wednesday 5th September for Year 13 students, I expect the vast majority of students to have decided which 5 courses and universities they want to apply to.

#### **Oxford and Cambridge**

- Students wanting to apply to Oxford or Cambridge can only apply to one or the other NOT both. We expect students to have expressed a desire to apply to Oxbridge by the start of January 2018 and said students have already received a significant amount of advice which they have been acting on. Competition is extremely fierce and we advise students honestly about their likely chances of success. Experience tells us that only the very best succeed, namely students with at least the majority of their GCSEs at A\*, over 90% in all their AS exams and top grade predictions at A level; not to mention their general academic breadth and genuine curiosity in the subject they want to study. Most successful

Oxbridge applicants are top of their year in at least one of the subjects they study. Academic excellence is imperative as is a real enthusiasm and broad knowledge in the subject being applied for. Students who apply to Oxbridge may have aptitude tests on Wednesday 31st October which take place in school. (N.B. This is during the half term week.)

#### Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine/Science

- Students who want to study medicine, dentistry or veterinary medicine/science can only make 4 choices for these subjects but they can make one further choice for a different course if they wish, making a total of 5 choices. Applicants must check whether they have to do the UKCAT or BMAT and register accordingly. Competition for medicine, dentistry and veterinary science is severe; it must be pointed out that there is less than a 1:2 chance of getting an offer at the first attempt and, in our experience, this is for applicants with at least 7 A\* grades at GCSE, and top grade predictions for their A levels. Students who are intending to apply for these disciplines have received much advice over the course of the year and should have a significant amount of relevant work experience to discuss in their personal statement to support their application, in addition to having read relevant scientific journals and medical ethics publications as a matter of routine since they started in the Sixth Form.
- Students may apply to do more than one course at a particular university but each course counts as one of the 5 choices.
- Students who want to go to university but are not sure what they want to do should have already been to see me. If not they must do so before the end of this term.
- Students who want to defer entry to 2020 still apply this year.
- Students who want to take a gap year and apply once they have left school should follow the process carefully this year so they are familiar with the system when they come to apply. We do support students who choose to apply during their gap year as well as providing an academic reference.

## **Apprenticeships**

For students opting for apprenticeships they can apply for as many as they want and they have already been told how to tailor their application to suit each different apprenticeship. The application dates for all apprenticeships vary considerably so students must read the information they get very carefully.

### **Resources in school.**

There are plenty of books at school in the Sixth Form Centre to support the students' careers/university research, together with prospectuses for most of the universities, which the students have already been encouraged to use to supplement their internet research.

A particularly useful website for students not considering university is;  
[www.notgoingtouni.co.uk](http://www.notgoingtouni.co.uk)

I routinely forward all emails with websites relating to diverse career opportunities to the students. They should research these opportunities independently if they are interested. Obviously they can come and ask for advice and assistance if needed.

We provide support for students who need help completing an application form, writing a CV, interview practice and so on.

### **University open days.**

We encourage students to book Open Days at the weekend, wherever possible, so that parents can attend too and students do not miss lessons in school. However, we recognise that some universities do not hold open days at the weekend so we allow students to take a maximum of 3 days off school for such visits. There is a process at school, which the students are familiar with, that they have to follow to get permission from their teachers to attend an open day. We do encourage students to be sensible when booking open days and only visit universities that they are seriously considering.

If you are unable to attend an Open Day or would just like to view a university without visiting it there are a number of virtual tours available again through the UCAS site.

## **The personal statement/CV.**

In addition to doing as much research as possible before the start of next term students should also be writing their personal statement to support their university application or their CV to support an application for an apprenticeship or work.

The UCAS website offers sound advice to help students write their personal statement.

The personal statement can be up to 4,000 characters long (including spaces). It must be in size 12 font Times New Roman. This should be word-processed and once the statement has been approved by the form tutor it can be copied and pasted into the application.

Students will receive considerable advice about writing a personal statement before the end of term so they should have no trouble getting this started. Any student needing further advice should discuss this with their form tutor in the first instance.

Additionally, there are some books for use in school giving further detailed advice. These can be borrowed from Mrs James, Sixth Form Centre Manager.

If a student is preparing his CV he should follow the broad principles of writing a personal statement but he should refer to his personal skills and qualities too in a more detailed way.

## **The university application.**

- The actual application to UCAS is done online and students will have been given full information about this during our UCAS day on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> July. By the end of this day they will have started their application and will be able to proceed with it at home during the summer.
- The cost of the application is £18.00 for one choice and £24.00 for two choices or more, but this is not payable online until the application is complete.
- There are many UCAS-based assemblies for the students between now and the end of September so they will be kept up to date with what they should be doing and when.

## **Apprenticeships**

Students applying for apprenticeships/work will have scheduled meetings to fit in with their personal applications.

## **Student loans/Student finance.**

Students can research this online during the application process. The student loan application is also completed on line and it will usually have to be finalised by the end of May in the year of application unless the student has made a deferred entry application. Student finance information is readily available on line and the online **student finance calculator** is a useful and interesting tool. Students have already had assemblies about student finance and there will be more during Year 13.

## **Key deadlines for university applications.**

The school's deadline for applications for all Oxbridge applicants, those applying for medicine, dentistry and veterinary medicine/science is **Friday 28th September**. For all other applications the deadline is **Friday 19th October**. Please remember that there is a significant amount of administration involved in school once the student has completed his application. However, we do aim to send the application to UCAS within a couple of weeks after the student has completed his application, made the relevant payment and sent it to me electronically.

## **Apprenticeships**

For apprenticeship applications the deadlines range from September 2018 to June 2019, so students have to keep a very close eye on the application timescale of each apprenticeship they are interested in.

## **The reference.**

- Each student has a school reference sent with their university application.
- The referee will have interviewed the student before writing the reference and he/she will also have a subject report specifically for the reference from each of the student's teachers.
- The reference is normally about 300/400 words in length.

- These are positive references which the students are allowed to read and discuss with their referee in school.

### **Apprenticeships**

Whilst compulsory for all university applications, a reference is not always requested as part of the actual apprenticeship application form but we are contacted separately to provide one. Once again the referee will have discussed the reference with the student and all comments are positive.

### **...and finally.**

To recap, this is what must be done over the summer holidays.

- Complete all research using [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com), [www.notgoingtouni.co.uk](http://www.notgoingtouni.co.uk) or the government apprenticeship website as the main resources.
- Decide which courses or apprenticeships to apply for and where. BE REALISTIC. Initial choices for university may need to be reviewed once AS grades are known in August.
- Write a first draft of the personal statement/CV which must be brought into school on the first day of term - Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> September - for the form tutor to read.
- Potential Oxbridge students, medics, dentists and vets must bring the 1<sup>st</sup> draft of their personal statement to me by Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> July. Their 2<sup>nd</sup> draft must be handed to me by 8.50 on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> September.
- If any parent would like to talk over any aspect of the application now or as the process unfolds, please give me a call.

I wish you all the best as you embark on this task.

Diane Halestrap  
Head of Sixth Form  
June 2018