



Pathways Beyond Norwood Handbook 2022-23

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1. **Introduction**

This handbook contains useful information on:

- How to choose your subject and universities.
- How to complete the application form and write your Personal Statement.
- The financial side of going to university.
- Special requirements for Oxford and Cambridge.
- Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science applications.
- The importance of good interview technique.
- Where to go for advice.
- Information about possible future careers

Make sure you make good use of this handbook – dip into it as you feel necessary and bring it to registration.

Remember you can come to me or any of the Sixth Form Team for help and advice. The Library, SSSP & Careers advisor are also a valuable source of information and help.

Best of luck,

Mr Parsons

2. Researching your higher education options

2.1 Your research timetable for the Summer

So, the final deadline for sending off your UCAS application form is December. That's light years away, isn't it? And there are so many other things to bother about: catching up on coursework; exams; keeping your part-time job... But don't forget that there is work to be done preparing for your higher education application, and it will involve planning, organization and brain work.

You will need to complete your UCAS Apply in September (the earlier UCAS receives it, the earlier the universities will get it, the earlier you will get decisions). At that stage, *you have to get it right*. **You cannot change UCAS Apply once it has gone.**

The *Spring* and *Summer terms* are vitally important to you – during the Summer break you will need to reflect on what you have learned and make some difficult decisions about your future. Remember: the best decisions are those that are carefully researched and considered over a period of months, rather than dashed off at the last minute.

Here are the main issues to think about at this time.

- **Are you going to apply at all?** It may be best to go through the whole process and apply – you can always withdraw later. This is better than making a last-minute, rushed application.
- **Your choice of course** Are you happy studying one of your current subjects or do you want to start something new? Have you a career in mind which requires a vocational degree? What about studying more than one subject as part of a joint, combined or modular degree?
- **Your choice of university** The big issue for many is whether to stay at home or not. There are pros and cons either way and, if you cannot decide, you can mix your choices. Also, look at different types of university in terms of campus, city or small town, old or new, large or small.
- **Your personal statement** This is an important part of the UCAS Apply. Some students write as many as ten drafts before they are satisfied with their efforts, so it is good to start working on this in early Summer. Look at sections 4.1 to 4.3 for help.

Things to do in the spring term:

- get advice;
- start your higher education research (for example, look at prospectuses);
- apply to attend higher education Summer schools of interest;
- organize a work-experience placement if it is important for the degree you want

to apply for (for example, medicine or social work);

- attend higher education fairs.
- **Things to do in the Summer term:**
- get advice;
- attend university open days;
- work on your choices of course and university;
- work on your personal statement.

By **early July**, you should have narrowed down your choices of course and university

to a short list, and have a strong rough draft of your personal statement.

2.2 Dates and Deadlines

Use this checklist to make sure you remain on track and on time with the application process.

Date	Norwood School	Externally
June	Pathways Beyond Norwood Event	UCAS application open
13th June - 24th June	Assessment week 3	
Friday 15 th July	Completion of 1 st Personal Statement draft Personal details Education Choices (provisional)	
11th July- 29th September	UKCAT - Clinical aptitude test (Medics ONLY) MUST be booked from June onwards	
Thursday 18 th August		A-Level Results Day
Tuesday 6 th September	Students return to school UCAS support in Careers & Wellbeing (PHSE)	
Early September	A-Level predictions available from tutors	
1st September	Registration for BMAT	
Mid-September		Applications can be sent to UCAS
Mon 29 th September	Internal deadline for completion of UCAS forms by early applicants	
15 th October		UCAS deadlines for all early applications: Oxbridge, Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Science
October	BMAT, Oxford & Cambridge admissions test (in school)	
November	A Level predictions reviewed	
22 nd November		BMAT results released
Monday 29th November	Internal deadline for all UCAS forms which will be sent by the end of term	Oxbridge interviews TBA
January 2023		Cambridge decisions sent Cambridge Winter Pool opens Oxford decisions sent

15 th January		UCAS final deadline (apart from Art & Design courses with a deadline of 24 March)
January		Final date for sitting LNAT test
End January		Cambridge Winter pool closes LNAT results released
25 February		UCAS Extra opens for eligible candidates (until July)
End of March		Student Finance Opens
Early May		First UCAS final decision date (for applicants who have received all their decisions by 31 March; later decision dates follow in early June and July)
Mid May 2023	Public Examinations begin	
Mid Aug		A-Level Results Day – Clearing Opens
Late September		Final date for 2023 admissions decisions

2.3 Who to go to for advice

During Years 12 & 13 you will take part in a Higher Education programme which is designed to help you make informed decisions about your HE choices.

The programme will include sessions on:

- Why go to University?
- How to apply?
- How to write your Personal Statement?

You will have the opportunity to attend:

- A Higher Education Convention.
- University Open Days.
- Higher Education Days.
- Taster Courses/Summer Schools (as appropriate)

2.4 Research using the internet – resources for tutors and students

The Aspire SE London website - www.aspire-aimhigher.ac.uk.

Much of the information you need is available online. The websites listed below are the essential components of your virtual library. Just add them to your “Favourites”!

Applying to University

www.ucas.com – this site, apart from providing the electronic means of applying (Apply), has everything both a student and their adviser could need (course search, finance information for starters) with good links to every university site.

What to study?

www.ucas.com

www.unifrog.co.uk

www.ukcoursefinder.co.uk

<http://university.which.co.uk/a-levels> explorer = **Which University guide**

Where to go?

www.ucas.com – course search and institution guide.

www.discoveruni.gov.uk – information on student satisfaction, tariff points accepted and graduate destinations.

www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk - league tables.

<http://education.guardian.co.uk/universityguide> – more league tables.

www.push.co.uk – written by students.

www.whatuni.com – video and written reviews.

www.opendays.com – university and college open day directory.

University prospectus websites – N.B. the printed prospectus can be out of date so always check the university website.

Admissions Tests

www.bmat.org.uk - Medicine.

www.ukcat.ac.uk – Medicine.

www.lnat.ac.uk – Law.

www.admissionstests.cambridgeassessment.org.uk

See section 6 on additional tests

Work after A Levels

www.careersbox.co.uk

Students with disabilities

www.skill.org.uk – **National Bureau for Students with Disabilities**

Graduate employment

www.prospects.ac.uk – go to ‘careers advice’, then ‘options with your subject’.

www.graduate-jobs.com

www.get.hobsons.co.uk

www.targetjobs.co.uk

www.milkround.com

www.sectorcareersinfo.co.uk – **the Sector Skills Council portal**

Work experience

<http://jobs.gapyear.com/>

Professional Scholarships

www.bconstructive.co.uk/scholarship

Institute of Physics Undergraduate Bursary Scheme www.iop.org

Also look at websites for the Institution of Engineering and Technology www.theiet.org ,

Institution of Civil Engineers www.ice.org.uk and Institution of Mechanical Engineers

www.imeche.org.

Gap Year

www.gapyear.com

www.csv.org.uk – Community Service Volunteers.

www.yini.org.uk –Year in Industry paid work placements before university.

www.gogapyear.com – hints on planning travel.

www.thesite.org.uk/travelandfreetime/travel/gapyears – charity and volunteer organisations.

www.vinspired.com – Millennium Volunteers Opportunities.

Study Abroad

www.britishcouncil.org/erasmus – British Council

www.fulbright.co.uk – USA.

www.braintrack.com – international index

www.ukcosa.org.uk – advice for UK students studying abroad and for international students studying in the UK

Finance

www.ucas.com – click on ‘student finance’.

www.studentfinancedirect.co.uk

www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/UniversityAndHigherEducation/StudentFinance

www.funderfinder.org.uk

www.grantfairy.com

2.5 Higher-Education Fairs: how to make the best use of them?

Higher-education fairs are a good way to get information on which to base your future plans, but they can also be a daunting and overwhelming experience. It is quite possible to end up more confused than when you started! Whatever the format of the event, there will be lots of friendly university staff around ready to “sell” their particular institution to you. So how do you get the best from the event?

First, what *not* to do... The nightmare scenario goes as follows. On arrival, you gratefully receive some free plastic carrier bags which you quickly fill up over the next thirty minutes with prospectuses from most institutions in the cosmos. Then you struggle on to the bus, endangering other passengers with your bulky luggage, and arrive home, not only with the potential to start your own higher education library (which you will never read), but with a double hernia which threatens your attendance at your AS exams!

A much better approach is to prepare and research beforehand. Try to concentrate on a small number of institutions (say up to eight or ten) which you know you are interested in. Naturally, you want the prospectuses, but also have two or three questions ready to ask at each stand.

These could be about the course (is there a course booklet?), the entrance requirements or career opportunities for graduates of a particular course. Even if you do not get a direct answer, you will be put in touch with someone (usually the admissions tutor) who can give you the specific information you require.

These days, universities often employ recent graduates in their school liaison/marketing teams. These are the ideal people to give you an up-to-date picture of what student life is really like at that institution. Think of questions you would like to ask them, perhaps to do with money, accommodation, entertainment, etc.

Your checklist

- Concentrate on eight to ten universities, find out where their stands are and head straight for them.
- Prepare two or three questions to ask each of them. Compare the answers.
- If there are recent graduates on the stands, ask them about their experiences.
- Don't spend more than an hour going round the fair, or at least have a break and come back later. It can be very tiring wandering round in circles constantly bumping into people doing the same thing.
- See the fair as just one part of your research towards making a sensible, realistic choice, not as the whole answer to it.
- Follow up over the next few weeks with phone calls, visits to open days and discussions with your tutor or careers staff. Don't let the dust settle!

Possible questions to ask

- Can I expect an interview?
- What kind of questions come up at interview?
- What A-level points do I need to get on to the course, or can I get in with Vocational A Levels?
- Will any offer I get be based on the UCAS tariff?
- How is students' work assessed?
- Where could I live? What would it cost?
- What is the social life like?

2.6 Open days: what to look for:

It is essential to check out the lie of the land before you make your application. After all, you are going to spend at least three years of your life at one of these institutions – you don't want a rude awakening in October when you arrive at university.

Although it is true that you have until next Spring to see the five institutions you have chosen on your UCAS Apply, the best advice is to try to see some of them in the Summer term (**This CAN be done remotely**). The Summer term is "the season" as far as organized open days are concerned (with a few in Spring and September).

It would be impossible to visit every university you have an interest in, so try to see a good cross-section. For example, choose one close to home and one in another city with a campus, or contrast old with new and large with small. This way, you will get a snapshot of the range of universities and colleges on offer. Get details of when open days are being held – you will find the information in prospectuses or on university websites. For some, you may have to book in advance; for others, you may be able simply to turn up. Those institutions which do not have formal open days may be happy to arrange a visit for you. You may be able to see a department of your choice and talk to the admissions tutor or students. Don't be afraid to pick up the phone and arrange this.

What you should gain from an open day is an overall impression of the place. Possibly, you will get an instinctive “gut feeling” which you can rely on when you come to make your choices.

Checklist of what to look out for at an open day

- Are the module options/course, content/exam structure what you want?
- What are the facilities like (this is especially important in a practical subject, such as engineering, or a lab-based science)?
- Did you get positive information on graduate career opportunities?
- Try to see the accommodation. Will you be given university accommodation in your first year? What is the cost?
- Was the open day well organized? Were you made welcome?
- Were the lectures interesting or deadly?
- Were the undergraduate students you met enthusiastic about the place?
- Could you see yourself here? Does the prospect feel exciting?

Visit:

www.opendays.com

3. Making your Higher-Education choices

3.1 Choosing a subject

There are thousands of different higher-education courses at hundreds of colleges. However, the system you use to narrow down your choices can be relatively simple.

Initially, you have to ask yourself the following questions.

- Are you interested in continuing to study something that you enjoyed at A-level?
- Do you want to do something that leads to a certain career?
- Do you want to study something new that you feel you might be very interested in?

Remember, also, that there are different types of degree available – single, joint or triple honours, etc. Now look at the two examples here. The first is very straightforward. The second less so.

Example 1

You enjoy and you are doing very well in Maths A-level, you do not have a definite career idea yet and you are not interested in studying anything new. You have looked at related degrees such as economics, computing and management studies, but you feel that you would just like to take the Maths to a higher level at university.

Example 2

You are doing politics A-level with English and History. You feel that your strengths are very much in the essay-based subjects. You are thinking about studying politics with philosophy and you may want to become a solicitor.

Example 2 encompasses all three strands of our model. You would be carrying on with the Politics; you would be able to enter your chosen career after doing a CPE (Common Professional Examination) Conversion Course; and you would pick up a new subject that you think would interest you. It is probable that you had been thinking about doing a law degree, but you realized that it was very important which university you went to, and that it would be easier to get in to do Politics and Philosophy than Law.

Choosing a subject based on your A levels

- Be aware that there will be marked differences in content between the degree course and the A-level of the same subject. For example, an **Economics degree will involve far more statistics**; a **Biology degree will include far more chemistry**.
- Some Arts subjects, such as English, are incredibly competitive. AAA/AAB is the standard offer from most traditional universities. Could you get what you want from a degree out of some other subject, such as Philosophy, Cultural Studies, American studies or Modern European Studies?
- Science degrees, on the other hand, in subjects related to A-levels (Chemistry, Physics, Biology and Maths) are much more flexible in their entry requirements, especially at the clearing stage.
- Even if you do a degree based on a subject that you did at A-level, it is still important to look at the career implications.

Choosing a subject based on your career ideas

- Remember that there are now a large number of careers that have graduate-only entry – either officially or unofficially. Teaching, professional surveying, professional engineering, chartered accountancy and medicine are some examples.
- Some careers require a specific degree (for example, pharmacy, hotel management) while others will accept a degree in any subject (for example, chartered accountancy, retail management).
- If you are going to do a degree that is specific to a particular career, **then it must match your own personal profile** – not just your academic qualifications. Does it reflect your interests, does it suit your abilities, does it accord with your values and attitudes? To find out, do some research: get some work experience; talk to people working in the career area; find information in libraries and on the internet.
- What if you change your mind? How easy will it be to gain entry to another career field? This will vary, but very often core skills gained in one degree can be useful for another career area.

Choosing a subject based on a new interest

- These subjects can be split into two different categories: degrees with no obvious career link; degrees with a career link.
- Examples of degrees with no obvious career link include Anthropology, Philosophy and Classics. You will find out about these courses through prospectuses, suggested further reading and any personal interests you may have. People often worry about the employment prospects of graduates in these subjects; **in fact, their levels of employment tend to be the same as for other non-vocational graduates**.

- Examples of degrees with a career link include Psychology (although only a minority of these graduates become professional psychologists – the usual route to this career is via Medicine) and Media Studies (although these graduates are in no way guaranteed a job in the media). You must be keen to study these subjects because you are very interested in the *content* of the course. What may follow in terms of a career is a bonus.

Sometimes people use university as a means to leave home or delay full-time work. This is fine up to a point. However, if you are seriously considering moving on to higher education, you must be able to place yourself in one of the following three categories:

- You know your academic strengths (and these have been confirmed by exam results or teachers opinions) and you would like to carry on a particular subject at university.
- You have a career idea that matches your interests, abilities, values and attitudes.
- You have developed an interest in a new subject that matches your interests, abilities, values and attitudes.

If none of these categories relates to you, then you should think very carefully about your next steps.

Finally, because everybody's situation is different and it is hard to generalize, it is always best to seek personal guidance relating to your particular situation. Talk to one of the Sixth Form Team or to a Careers Officer. **Use Worksheet 1 at the end of this handbook.**

3.2 Narrowing down your choices

Now let us presume that you have decided what to study. How do you narrow down your choices to the five courses on your UCAS Apply? The main factors to consider are: course content; your predicted grades; the reputation of the university/college; the location of the university/college (see section 3.4).

Course content

Many degrees will be very similar from one university to another, *either* because they have to meet the requirements of professional bodies (for example, law, medicine, psychology, electrical engineering, etc.), *or* because past practice has led to degrees in certain fields having similar content (for example, business studies).

When course content is fairly similar, it might be worth looking into the methods of assessment the university uses (exams, assessments, and modules) as a means of narrowing down your choices. Different methods of assessment suit different people.

On the other hand, some degrees with the same title can vary greatly in content (for example, geography, history, media studies and languages). You should study the course information in depth to make sure that you will be getting what you want.

Some courses provide variety through the range of available options. Some universities have an in-built system to give you a range of choice, for example through faculties or schools.

Your predicted grades

N.B. – If you are applying for a very high demand, selective course you must read the section Points win prizes.

Universities state their entrance requirements for each course in their prospectuses. To understand the way entrance requirements are set, see section 3.6. You need to make sure that your predicted grades match the requirements for your chosen course.

Predicted grades are based on: your GCSE results; your AS-level and unit results at the end of year 12; your overall performance in the sixth form. Schools are now expert at predicting the right grades for students, so you have to trust them. If schools get them wrong, it is normally because they have made the predictions too high.

The more popular the degree course you apply for, the higher your predicted grades will need to be. For example, English, Law, Medicine and Veterinary Science will normally be looking for AAA/AAB. If you are not predicted to get these grades then your application will probably be unsuccessful.

If you are applying for a degree which is having a decline in applications, such as chemistry or mechanical engineering, you may find that you can take more risks. For example, if they are looking for BBC and you are predicted CCC you may still have a chance of being made an offer.

Predictions are only valid for this year and become irrelevant as soon as your results are known. If you do get higher grades than predicted, you will be free to apply again next year or to reject any offers that you may have and apply through clearing.

Some universities will offer applicants an alternative course if they feel they cannot make the student an offer for their original choice. It is also probable that some universities like to consider GCSE grades and will only make offers to students with a certain numbers of A or A* grades. With the introduction of AS and A2 levels, AS grades are likely to have an influence on the offers you receive.

It is important that you are fully aware of what will and will not be open to you. A student predicted to get BBB will have different options to the student predicted DEE.

Reputation

The best source of real information on courses, without any marketing spin, is the Unistats website which has information on student satisfaction, what UCAS Tariff Points their student really get and what sort of jobs their students go onto.

3.3 The things that students think are important in their first year

The Higher Education Academy surveyed 15,000 first year students and asked them the best and worst aspects of their first year experience. Their responses can help us in our decisions with narrowing down to the final five choices.

Making new friends

This seems to be the most important issue for new students at university.

Quotes:

“Meeting new people and gaining in confidence academically and personally because of the new level of independence”

“Not knowing anyone, sitting on my own”

Action-Find out what the course/university does to integrate and socialise new students.

Teaching related

Contrary to popular opinion, students did seem concerned about this issue.

Quotes:

“Learning new things at a higher level, being able to ask why things happen and being able to discuss rather than being told, ‘you don’t need to know that”

“Communication with tutors, you can never find them, unless you email them, not knowing who to ask help for”

Action: Find out the staff to student ratio. On visits, ask the students if they find their teaching staff helpful-go to www.discoveruni.gov.uk

Workload and time management

This seems to be the most dominant worst feature of the first year experience.

Quotes:

“With hindsight I would have to change the fact that I didn’t realise exactly how much work I had to put in. I would have liked much tighter guidelines on how much reading, and which reading to do and when.”

“I would change my time management from day one, instead of struggling to manage the work load and feel like I am not doing my academic best to achieve my life long goal”

“To make sure I was really organised and prepared. Having come straight from achieving A Levels in sixth form, this has been a shock. Sometimes brutal”

Action-Does the university offer any help with transition from the very guided learning you have had in sixth form to the very independent learning you will face at university.

The first-year experience of higher education in the UK, The Higher Education Academy 2007

3.4 Choosing a university: location

With over 300 institutions to choose from, how do you narrow it down to just five for the UCAS form (or four if you are applying to study medicine, veterinary science or dentistry)? Obviously, you must pick the most suitable courses, but location and the type of university (redbrick, campus, etc.) are also worth considering. Cost, in particular, may be an issue. Here are some other points to think about.

- **Should you stay at home in London or not?**

Some *advantages* are that you will be close to family, friends, part-time work and all things familiar. It could also be cheaper if you are living at home. Some *disadvantages* are that you might miss out on a slice of independence, you will be commuting to college, and your existence will be very similar to school sixth-form life. Remember: London is one of the most expensive cities in Europe and you are not immune, even if you are not paying rent.

- **If you go away, how far is it from London?**

Here are some examples.

50 miles	Luton, Sussex, Kent
100 miles	Birmingham, Leicester, Bristol
200 miles	Leeds, Manchester, Sheffield, York
400+ miles	Anywhere in Scotland or Northern Ireland

Obviously, the further away you are the more difficult and expensive it is to return to London for weekends, but the cost of living away from London is often a lot cheaper.

- **City or countryside?**

Another city (although none are as large as London) may have similar facilities to those you are used to. On the other hand, you may want something very different, such as green fields and sheep!

- **Large or small?**

Some universities have over 15,000 students, others have 6,000. Colleges of higher education are often small, with a friendly, personal atmosphere.

- **How cosmopolitan will it be?**

Remember that we are used to a multicultural environment in London and not everywhere will be the same.

- **Is it a campus?**

Campus universities have all their facilities on one site (teaching, living, cafes, shops). Some examples are Essex, Sussex and Keele. It can be handy but some find the idea claustrophobic.

- **New or old?**

Do your architectural surroundings matter to you? Some institutions are centuries old, others were built in the 1960s, some are new.

- **Sundry issues**

There may be any number of personal preferences which will influence your choice. What is the ratio of males to females? Is accommodation provided or do you have to find it yourself? Do you like the local football team?

Important points to remember

- You have five choices (four, in some cases) so you can mix and match to keep your options open.
- Going to university is a big opportunity to strike out on your own without breaking links with home (the academic year is generally only thirty weeks, so you have long holidays at home).
- If you are not a geography expert, take advice about where places are and, more importantly, how accessible they are.
- Some universities have several sites and separate franchised colleges, often miles apart. Make sure that you know which site your course is being taught at and that you are happy about the location.
- Remember that, generally, there are excellent transport links from London and that travelling time is often more important than distance.
- Do try to visit some universities so that you gain a more rounded view than you get from the prospectus, and do try to speak to students already there.

3.5 Making sure that you are doing the right A Level's & Btec's

Career or university entrance requirements

If you have a firm idea about the career or university course you want to apply for, then you must make sure that you are taking the appropriate A levels & Btecs. For example, some medicine degrees require chemistry at A2 level, while others will accept an AS level in chemistry.

It is therefore very important that you look in detail at the university prospectuses, coming out in March to May, to ensure you meet all the requirements.

- **Some universities make offers based on A-level/Btec grades.**

This is the old-fashioned method. To take an example, you might be applying to study geography and the university wants BBC in your A Level results.

- **Some universities make offers based on the UCAS tariff.**

To take the same example, you are applying to study geography and the university wants a tariff of 112 (this is the equivalent of BBC at A-Level & DMM at Btec Level). According to this method, numerical values are given to the qualifications that you take in the sixth form. The higher the grades you get, the more points you get. The totals are added up and this is your tariff (see table on the next page).

- **Some universities make offers based on the tariff, but you have to achieve certain grades and/or certain subjects within this.**

University prospectuses will be released in March. These will state the entrance requirements for specific courses. You will need to read them carefully.

The more traditional universities tend to base their entrance requirements on A-level/ Btec grades, while the modern universities are more inclined to use the tariff.

Calculating tariffs

Look at the tariff table below. The following points may help.

- Point scores can be aggregated from different qualifications. There is no ceiling to the number of points that can be accumulated.
- There can be no double counting – students cannot count the same or similar qualifications twice.
- Many qualifications are now included in the UCAS tariff, such as music qualifications.
- For further information visit www.ucas.com and use the “Tariff Calculator”.

<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/tariff-calculator>

3.9 Types of Higher Education Course (not postgraduate)

Degrees can have different titles such as:

Bachelor of Arts	BA
Bachelor of Science	BSc

Master of Arts	
Master of Science	MSc
Bachelor of Engineering	BEng
Master of Engineering	MEng
Bachelor of Laws	LLB
Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery	MB BS

MA

As a general rule of thumb, a batchelors degree is normally three years long and a masters' degree is normally 4 years long.

Types of degree by content:

- Single subject – Bsc in Geology
- Equal combination – Mathematics and Management Studies
- Major-minor combination – Mathematics with Management Studies
- Triple combinations – Philosophy, Psychology and Physiology
- Cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary – can take a wide range of courses across a range of disciplines to build up a degree programme e.g. BA Economic and Social Studies.

Foundation Degrees

- Normally two years long
- Work and career related
- Can be studied at the university or a local franchised further education college
- An optional top-up year will convert qualification to an honours degree.
- Gradually replacing Higher National Diplomas
- This course is often marketed at non-traditional Higher Education applicants such as Adults.
- For more information visit www.foundationdegree.org.uk

Sandwich Degrees (normally 4 years)

- Could contain a single (thick) 12 month work placement, or two (thin) 6 month work placements
- Placement is normally paid work
- Sometimes placements are found for the student, sometimes they have to find them themselves.

Extended Degrees

- Offer an initial preliminary year at college and are common in engineering and science.
- There are a few art and design courses, which are offered as an alternative to Art Foundation.
- Preliminary years for medicine offer an alternative route but will still want very high A Level grades.

3.10 The University Groupings

A very useful way to understand the UK university/HE sector is to look at the groupings/associations that they have formed themselves into.

Here we look at who they are and what they say about themselves – all the information is taken from their own websites – unless in italics.

Russell Group www.russellgroup.ac.uk

The Russell Group is an association of 20 major research-intensive universities of the United Kingdom. Formed in 1994 at a meeting convened in Russell Square, the Group is composed of the Vice-Chancellors/Principals of the Universities listed opposite. There are also a number of active working groups.

In 2006/07, Russell Group Universities accounted for 66% (over £2.2 billion) of UK Universities' research grant and contract income, 68% of total Research Council income, 56% of all doctorates awarded in the United Kingdom, and over 30% of all students studying in the United Kingdom from outside the EU. In the 2001 national Research Assessment Exercise, 78% of the staff in Grade 5* departments and 57% of the staff in Grade 5 departments were located in Russell Group Universities, and in 2007/08 Russell Group Universities were allocated approximately 66% of the total quality-related (QR) research funding allocated by the Funding Councils.

University of Birmingham
University of Bristol
University of Cambridge
Cardiff University
University of Edinburgh
University of Glasgow
Imperial College London
King's College London
University of Leeds
University of Liverpool
London School of Economics & Political Science
University of Manchester
Newcastle University
University of Nottingham
Queen's University Belfast
University of Oxford
University of Sheffield
University of Southampton
University College London
University of Warwick

4. Making your application

4.1 Preparing your UCAS personal statement

Your 'Personal Statement' is at the heart of your application. It is your opportunity to convince University admissions tutors to offer **you** a place. It is especially important if you are applying for a very competitive course at a very popular university.

The statement is likely to be between 350 and 550 words long. You **must** get it prepared early.

What do admissions tutors look for in a personal statement?

There are three main areas:

- evidence of motivation and interest in your chosen subject;
- evidence of ability and interest in your current studies;
- evidence of interests outside of your studies.

Think of your Personal Statement as 5 sections.
Here are some hints to help get you thinking.

Section 1

Your choice of course – You need to explain your reasons for choosing this course at university, and the background to your interest in the subject. Remember: *what* do you want to study? *Why* do you want to study it? What *evidence* have you got that proves this?

Section 2

Your current studies – Take each of your subjects and explain what you find interesting in them – that is, evidence that you *enjoy* aspects of study. This is an opportunity for you to prove that you are seriously interested in further study. Show how skills developed in **one** subject can be transferred to another. Give evidence of the skills you have developed in each of your subjects.

Section 3

Work experience – Either paid or voluntary e.g. Peer Mentoring/helping in the lower school/part time jobs. Show what you have gained e.g. confidence, skills etc.

Section 4

Extra-curricular activities – Divide these into 'thinking' type activities like reading/debate/chess etc. and 'physical' activities e.g. sports/dance etc. Again, show how they have developed **you** as a person.

Section 5

Why I won't drop out! – This section should convince the admissions tutors that you really understand what you are committing yourself to. Do this by mentioning your research and experience of Higher Education.

How to go about it

- Start by making a list of points you would like to include under the above headings. Use a friend/someone at home/member of staff to bounce ideas off.
- Next, turn these points into sentences, then paragraphs.
- Eventually, it should all flow together and make you sound interesting!
- Do not repeat information (for example, your name, subjects) which is evident from the other parts of the UCAS form.

Some ideas about what to include: sports (playing/watching); work experience (part-time, voluntary); field courses; Summer schools; lectures; conferences; university visits; book/magazine articles you have read; politics/current affairs; environmental issues; music (playing/listening); travel (done/planned); career ideas.

The words you use

Your personal statement will be more attractive to the reader if you use interesting vocabulary to express yourself. Try to be different from the rest! Here are some ideas, but think of your own and use a thesaurus – but **do not** use words you do not really understand! If unsure, check with someone who knows.

develop	become, broaden, grow, progress
enjoy	look forward to, relish, welcome
fascinated	absorbed, attracted, inspired, motivated
follow	appreciate, comprehend, fan of, grasp, understand
gained	acquired, discovered, realized, recognized
good	beneficial, great, improved, successful
hobby	leisure pursuit, pastime, recreation, relaxation
interested	active in, attracted, curious, motivated
interesting	absorbing, appealing, challenging, thought-provoking
particularly	exceptionally, mainly, often, strongly

plan	consider, organize, project, strategy
spare time	free time, time on my hands, time to kill
study	examine, investigate, research, specialize, survey
topic	content, issue, matter, point, theme

4.2 Personal Statements: subject-specific advice

Below is a list of subjects with specific advice about how to get started on a personal statement.

Architecture Ideas to include: visits to modern and historical sites; work experience in an architect's office; evidence of reading on the history of architecture; your preferences among twentieth-century architects; your favourite building and why. For more ideas, visit www.greatbuildings.com.

Business/management/finance Read *The Economist* and the business pages of the broadsheet newspapers, watch *The Money Programme*. You will need to show: evidence of coping with a wide variety of subjects; evidence of interest in economics, finance, marketing, human resources and IT; a high level of numeracy; evidence of working in teams on projects (AGCE business students could identify specific examples). It is a good idea to focus on some particular economics issues, for example, EMU, the sub-prime crisis.

Computing/IT Courses can vary in their content, so make sure you know what you are applying for. Some courses will be concerned about your maths ability, some may be more concerned about design or business skills. Try to think about all the experience you have had with computers and programming, inside and outside of school. What did you learn from it?

Education/Teacher Training Include your work experience/observation in schools and describe what you learned from it (for example, mixed-ability teaching, testing, special needs). Mention any work with young people and what problems you encountered.

Engineering The purpose of engineering is the design and manufacture of the "hardware" of life. Show evidence that you can relate maths and physics to a "hardware" issue (for example, relating the study of electricity in physics to how a car ignition works). Write about an engineering issue that interests you.

English Reading beyond the syllabus is essential. Write about your favorite authors, poets and dramatists and why you like them. Mention theatre visits. Show that you understand the

link between literature and history (through knowledge of a historical setting). Most degrees are literature based, so do not go on about creative writing or journalism too much.

Geography Describe visits or field trips to any specific region. Read geographical magazines and describe any special interests you have and why. Show an awareness of world issues and an interest in your own locality.

History You need to show a passion for the past above and beyond school work. Prove it by writing about books and magazines on history, saying why they interest you. Show an interest in the wide range of history – not just Europe between the wars! If you have a joint interest in history and literature, exploit it.

Languages/European Studies Include visits to relevant countries, noting the cultural and geographical features of the region visited. Give evidence of your interest in the language,

history and literature related to that language. It is a good idea to read newspapers, magazines and websites in the appropriate language.

Law Visit law courts and take notes on cases heard. Follow legal arguments in the press. Read law sections in broadsheet newspapers. Read *Learning the Law* by Glanville Williams or *How to Study Law* by A Bradney. Some admissions tutors are more concerned about your commitment to law as an academic discipline rather than a career. Include evidence of work experience/work shadowing/career research.

Maths Include anything that proves your love of maths: wider reading, entering competitions, maths clubs. Mention other interests related to maths, such as IT, chess or philosophy. Explain how you would like to use your maths degree in your future career. Include any evidence of maths that you have had to learn by yourself or maths problems you have solved through determination.

Media Describe work experience/shadowing and what you learned from it (for example, job roles, how media organizations differ). Include evidence that you have shown initiative outside of the syllabus (for example, creating your own website). Show that your reasons for applying correspond to the content of the course, and that you are not just doing it to get a job in the media.

Medicine/Dentistry/Veterinary Science *Don't let your desire to have lots of interesting things to say on your personal statement get in the way of your studies – you will need very high grades indeed!* Admissions tutors are looking for evidence of: work experience and what you learned from it; scientific interest; interest in the welfare of others; communication skills; stability and stick ability. Try to gain a more in-depth knowledge of one or two medical issues outside of your syllabus (for example, about the roles of health professionals, or social factors which influence health and disease). Think about which disease interests you most and why?

Music/Drama Even though you may have an audition, most universities will take your talent as a given and are more concerned with your interest in the academic issues. They are looking for evidence of intellectual curiosity and an interest in the cultural background and construction of the subject matter. Therefore wider reading and concert and theatre visits are essential.

Natural Sciences (biochemistry, biology, chemistry and physics) Show that your interest in your natural science goes beyond your A level, through wider reading of scientific journals, for example. Become more knowledgeable on one or two issues. Say what have you enjoyed most in your relevant A levels and why. Relate something you have learned to a practical use. Find out more about the careers these degrees can lead to (all the relevant institutes have careers sections on their websites).

Professions allied to medicine (speech therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, radiography, dietetics and nursing) Admissions tutors are looking for evidence of: work experience and what you learned from it; scientific interest; interest in the welfare of others; communication skills; stability and stick ability. Try to gain a more in-depth knowledge of one or two medical issues outside of your syllabus (for example, about the roles of health professionals, or social factors which influence health and disease). Make it clear that you understand the differences between a physiotherapist, occupational therapist and speech therapist.

Social Sciences (politics, psychology, sociology) You need to show evidence of; reading current affairs avidly; wider reading that shows an interest in society, political issues and human behaviour; an understanding of how these are all interrelated. If you have not studied the subject before, provide evidence of reading an introductory book (especially for psychology). If you have studied the subject before, then identify something in the syllabus and say why it interests you.

Sport and Physical Education You need to be clear about what sort of course you are applying for. Most sports courses will be looking for evidence of interest in physiology, psychology, sports performance, coaching and the business and administration of sport.

Theology Try to get across that you have attempted to gain some knowledge of a broad range of religions. Those who are not studying Theology at A Level should think about related aspects of their studies, especially history, English literature, philosophy, languages or theatre studies. There is not a requirement to be religious to study many of these degrees. Visit the www.multifaithcentre.org website.

Examples of personal statements

You can view a large number of Personal Statements if you register with Pure Potential (www.purepotential.org).

The following are real-life examples of personal statements for nine different subjects. They are included to give you an idea of what previous students have put in their statements. Use them as a starting point for your thoughts. Consider the **strengths and weaknesses** of each example in the light of the advice you have been given on 'How to write a brilliant personal statement'.

IMPORTANT: PLAGIARISM – copying all or part of somebody else’s statement is easily spotted. UCAS runs electronic checks. This can lead to disqualification of your application.

Example of a personal statement for History and French:

The heart of my motivation for wanting to study History and French at university is the opportunity it would provide me with to gain an in-depth knowledge of the structures of past societies which have been the foundation for modern civilisations; furthermore, I am interested in the interrelationship between different periods of times and want to benefit from immersing myself in the literature, culture and language of Francophone countries. My interest in History has been supplemented through attending a History Master class at Oxford University where I was introduced to the concept of viewing history through Annales and Marxist interpretations. Through my independent reading of E.H. Carr's, "What is History?" I have gained an understanding of how subjectivity influences a historian's interpretations. Additionally, I participate in the LSE Choice Scheme (History) where I am thoroughly enjoying the opportunity to focus on unconventional topics whilst supplementing my current A-Level topics. Similarly, my experience of French taster courses at King's College London and Queen Mary's gave me an insight into the varied foci studied; the literature aspect especially intrigued me. Although French literature is not included in my A-level studies I have enjoyed reading Albert Camus' 'L'etranger' and aim to extend this introduction to French Literature throughout the year. Studying at A-level has stimulated me both intellectually and academically. French and English have provided me with a basis to continue my studies of language and literature at university through increasing my understanding and awareness of grammar, syntax and the analytical skills needed to craft sentences and meanings. It has also equipped me with the aptitude to dissect texts meticulously whilst appreciating how the use of language can not only affect one's interpretation of the text but also, is crucial to successfully arguing a hypothesis. Similarly, History has improved my oral skills through discussing topics that are continuously open to debate and hence has furthered my competence in arguing my opinions. I thoroughly enjoy analysing, interpreting and evaluating various sources, which are crucial to determining the causes and consequences of historical events. By studying French I would be able to use French sources at first hand to add an additional perspective. Government and Politics has also provided me with a greater understanding of how political systems have shaped historical events, for instance the policies taken by heads of states during the Cold War had a great impact on the global community; or how Athenians saw the first use of democracy. The progression of the

European Union has opened my eyes to the significance of merging language and culture. Therefore, on a personal level I am keen to develop my knowledge of French language and society. I am currently editor of the VI form newspaper, and with others contribute articles relating to current issues or areas of interest in school. This has equipped

me with the ability to communicate and present information to other students whilst also giving me the opportunity to publish my ideas. My participation in Global Group also gave me the chance to produce a short film called, 'A Question of Being Muslim', an insight into the perception of Muslims in the media and society. This helped me to delve into current affairs whilst providing me with important skills: teamwork and diligence. My interest in these activities has prompted me to consider a future career in journalism. I am also Deputy Head Girl and a peer mentor; I am currently preparing for the Duke of Edinburgh Gold award; I have been actively involved with fundraising for the charity Envision and I have worked as an assistant teacher at a Summer Literacy School. I have made this application after thorough research into my options and I look forward to studying History and French at university.

Example of a personal statement for Maths

Since starting my A-Levels, I have found Mathematics to be the most intriguing. I enjoy finding solutions to mathematical problems, as it is intellectually stimulating and I like the challenge. Mathematics is the force behind today's pace of technology and I consider it to be a crucial element. One reason why I believe it is important to study Mathematics is that it enables one to create mathematical models to represent real world problems such as inflation and these models can also be used to predict financial problems that individuals could possibly face. Studying my four chosen subjects has definitely broadened my knowledge and it has also greatly improved my ability to critically analyse problems. Studying A-Level Mathematics so far has taught me to be an analytical thinker and has improved my problem-solving skills. I particularly enjoy calculus and algebra. Through this subject, I have also learnt that rational thinking, patience and persistence are crucial skills, which I am now better able to

apply to my other subjects. Teaching Mathematics to young school children has taught me to communicate mathematical ideas clearly. In year 11, I won a bronze award in the UK Mathematics Challenge. Although I enjoy Chemistry, it is the mathematical aspect of it that I find the most engaging. Biology also greatly interests me and I can use my knowledge of Mathematics to enhance my understanding of Biology. While away on a four-day field trip to study ecology, I enjoyed applying Mathematics to analyse statistical data such as error bars and carrying out the chi-squared test to test various hypotheses. Meeting deadlines for various coursework in Biology and Chemistry has equipped me with skills such as time-management, attention to detail and working well under pressure, as well as providing me with an opportunity to present my ideas in diverse ways. My ability to research independently has also improved. Studying AS Business Studies has given me a wider understanding of the business world but essentially, it has made me realise that Mathematics can also be applied to the business world, whether it is to make future predictions or analyse past data. I have acquired transferable skills such as communicating effectively and being able to work well as part of a team through doing group work and presentations, which has

enhanced my confidence. The most personally valuable event I have taken part in was a charity expedition to Botswana during Summer 2008 where I worked with the locals in accomplishing two projects. Although this was a very challenging journey, it gave me great satisfaction, a sense of achievement and an excellent insight into the relevance of developing good working relationships, team building and leadership skills. This experience and the related fundraising tasks which I completed in order to participate in the challenge, have made me more responsible as a young adult. As a member of the charity Envision, I have gained a strong sense of environmental responsibility, the value of commitment, respect, and the need for a cleaner environment to help minimise problems such as global warming. I have also been involved in other community projects at school and represent the school as a prefect. In year twelve, I assisted year eight pupils improve their reading skills. A mathematical degree has many assignable skills which will open up many further career choices. By having undertaken

research into a range of courses, attending open days and lectures, I am now certain that I have made the right Higher Education choices on a Mathematical course. I am looking forward to the opportunity to develop academically and personally at university and I am confident I can succeed and meet the challenges presented by university life.

Example of a personal statement for Medicine

I will not know all there is to know about medicine in my lifetime, but the opportunities for research into fascinating areas of medical science and the chance to make a difference to the quality of people's lives is what attracts me to it. It is amazing how the body unlike a machine can repair itself and as a doctor I would be at the forefront of aiding this process. I have benefited from a number of work experience placements and projects, all of which have done nothing but convince me that studying medicine is my aim. Completing an internship at Lewisham hospital on the psychiatric triage ward offered me the opportunity to work alongside a consultant psychiatrist and his team. I was given the responsibility of taking the history of a patient, an experience from which I gained insight into the significance of patient/doctor trust. I also learnt a lot about the structured teamwork, which supports the treatment of patients (and in the case of the mentally ill patients I witnessed, their families as well). During my work experience at a clinic in Hampstead I observed the day to day running of a G.P clinic and its collaborative work with nearby hospitals. I saw how an efficient team of non-medical staff is essential to the smooth running of the clinic and following up patients. Being a doctor requires patience, perseverance and the capacity to communicate with a range of personalities to meet individual needs. By helping out a 90 year old neighbour, doing her shopping, wheeling her around and cleaning her flat, I have come to realise the extent of care the elderly need. At school, I tutored maths pupils with special needs, such as ADHD (who find the ceiling more interesting), which challenged and enhanced my communication skills. I have found both experiences fulfilling. Overall, I have enjoyed working with those who regularly use the NHS: the elderly, children and those with mental illness. I greatly enjoy not only the excitement of discovering something new, albeit

small, but also the satisfaction of finally overcoming difficulties. During the Summer I completed a project with a PhD student at the National Institute of Medical Research where I used in situ hybridisation to confirm genes responsible for apoptosis on fruit fly embryos and produced a report. This project enhanced my knowledge of biology, and I made use of and developed key scientific lab skills I had learnt in my science subjects. It showed me a direction that could be taken in medicine. My interest in the profession was strengthened by the fact that I have always enjoyed my science education. Studying synthetic pathways in organic chemistry has enhanced my understanding of biochemistry taught in biology, which also gave me a foundation of knowledge to start my research project. I have found Physics and Maths enjoyable as they have fulfilled my passion for problem solving and even helped with some of my hobbies. As a member of the Next Generation Science group I participated in physics projects on flooding prevention and meteorites. Attending maths master classes at the Royal Institute pushed my maths further and demonstrated how complex problems could be solved using logical mathematical principles. I have also gained a better understanding of my culture and heritage by studying Arabic at A' Level. My hobbies include playing guitar with friends and I sometimes perform in front of the sixth form at major assemblies. I find this greatly stress relieving. I also swim weekly which has developed goal-achieving discipline in me. I also fly in simulator games, as this has been a long-term hobby of mine. Having completed medical-related work-experience, attended a variety of higher education events and extensively researched Medicine as a career, I am fully aware of the challenges

and demands of this career choice. I feel I have the aptitude, motivation, physical and mental stamina to study medicine. In short, medicine is where I want my future to lie.

Example of a personal statement for Psychology

My interest in Psychology emanates from my passion and natural ability to study and interpret human behaviour, especially using evolutionary/biological ideas as a means of explanation. The debates I participated in as part of my Psychology AS course have greatly improved my oral communication skills and have given me the ability to speak with confidence in public. Also, having carried out independent research on course assignments such as Walster's Matching Hypothesis, I understood the basis of many Psychological theories which stem from research findings. Although my findings did not support his hypothesis, these skills, I feel shall be invaluable to me in university life, especially as research is a key aspect in the field of Psychology. The other subjects I chose to study at A-level compliment my curiosity for Psychology. Biology has helped me understand the effect of increased stress hormones such as corticosteroids and cortisol on the human body which can lead to a "fight or flight" response. After having taken part in practical experiments, backing up each one of these with theory based coursework; I have learnt the value of accuracy and the importance of detail. Similarly, Chemistry has deepened my understanding of specific psychology topics that use science to explain theories. Also, the importance of considering the value and effect of

chemically based drugs, especially using optical isomers, on the human psyche will be essential to me in furthering into Clinical Psychology. Studying Maths has been of personal interest to me as it feeds my need to solve problems. The fact that each solution has a definite answer encourages me to work logically in order to get the correct outcome. As a result of which I have attained a higher level ability in problem solving, education, research, and in daily life. Having attended various open days and completing the Medical Outreach Programme at Imperial College School of Medicine I have learnt various aspects of student life such as financial matters and managing the work load, which I believe will be essential to me when I start university. Additionally, I am a member of my local community where, alongside others I help to organise social and religious events. Working part-time has greatly improved my confidence especially when faced with challenges that test my abilities, and I have learnt to adapt to different environments. I attend the gym on a weekly basis and play basketball in the Summer as I enjoy physical activities that are both, important for my health as well as stress relieving. For the past year, I have enjoyed my role as Form Representative. This opportunity has immensely developed within me the invaluable characteristics of responsibility, leadership, organisational skills, and the ability to work confidently under pressure, as part of a team or as an individual at my own discretion. In August 2008 I completed the Fulcrum Challenge. An experiential learning journey and a global community project designed to increase awareness of the harsh realities of poverty, of personal responsibilities and to develop my commitment as a global citizen. At the end of which, I was recognised and awarded a 'Certificate of Personal Effectiveness'. As part of a group of students, I travelled to a remote village in Tanzania where we constructed a library for the local high school using the methods and limited tools of the locals. The experience of witnessing and living under the conditions of poverty and teaching in a poverty stricken school with a great constriction of resources, taught me to have greater appreciation for the most minor of luxuries in my life that I would otherwise take for granted, from clean water for drinking to everyday schooling. Such deep realisations have made me become a better individual with more to offer to society - a sensitive youth, with a much more positive approach to life, society, and education.

Example of a personal statement for Law

A keen interest in Law, coupled with a passion for learning and a desire to pursue a career in the legal profession have fuelled my decision to read Law at degree level. While the vocational aspects of the course interest me, I have been attracted to the more academic aspects of the course, such as Jurisprudence. I first began to explore the idea of studying Law after a work experience placement that I undertook with a solicitor's firm. I gained a place on a two-year "Pathways to Law" programme last year which has given me many Law related experiences that have cemented my decision to read Law. All of my A Level studies have contributed greatly towards my increasingly independent approach to learning. I have had various opportunities for independent research and study through all my subjects. For

instance, writing my English Literature coursework on Shakespeare's "Othello" gave me the chance to research and analyse different critiques of the play. This has increased my awareness of the fact that texts can be read on many levels and this is one of the reasons why I enjoy reading Shakespeare. Studying History I have found that further reading has enhanced my understanding of the subject. It has also been immensely useful in other subjects such as English and Music where I have been able to put what I am learning into context. Independent study was essential throughout my study of Maths and enabled me to complete the full A Level course in one year. My involvement in the Pathways to Law programme has given me an excellent introduction to studying Law. It has made me keener to study this subject. I have attended lectures on various aspects of the Law, for example, criminal law and contract law. I particularly enjoyed a lecture and discussion seminar on Human Rights Law as it allowed me to explore not only the practicalities of the Law, but also the moral and social implications that Human Rights legislation has on a society, therefore touching on Jurisprudence, which I found to be extremely thought provoking. A seminar on the way the legal systems of the UK and the USA work helped me in my History course as I found it easier to understand the difficulties faced by the Civil Rights campaigners in America in having Civil Rights legislation passed. During a residential Summer school I had the opportunity to research capital punishment and give a presentation on this subject. Through the various work experiences I have undertaken I have learnt about Law in practice. In particular, shadowing a trainee solicitor at the "Magic Circle" firm, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, opened my eyes to the rigorous detail involved in the job. One of the most exciting experiences I have had was taking part in a four-week televised school exchange programme for Channel 5 (How the Other Half Learns). This exchange looked at the differences in public and private sector education. Through the exchange I found it interesting to see the social differences between participants in both schools as I felt that the differences in standard of education were not significant but it opened my eyes to the elitism that still exists in society. I have been a member of my school's Saturday morning Music Academy for the last six years, giving a lot of my free time to pursuing music on an extra-curricular basis. It has required tenacity and extreme discipline. Being a part of the Academy has given me the opportunity to work with younger musicians, which is something I really enjoy. I have also been able to work with a younger student more intensively through peer mentoring, an experience which has been extremely rewarding for both me and my mentee. Being first clarinet in our orchestra, I perform regularly at various school events. I also represent the school in my role as Senior Prefect. Higher Education is a challenge that I will embrace. I feel I have developed the skills needed for education at this level and that I will gain a great deal from the study of Law.

An Example of a Personal Statement for Biological Sciences

The study of the Biological Sciences has been a major reason for unceasing advancement in the field of technology and medicine; and with currently unexplored areas in this extensive subject, progress can be made with the input of future biologists. The importance of

understanding the genetic make up of living cells and organisms can be used as the basis of developing and improving our lives. For example, the beginnings of recent UK trials on a super-vaccine to protect against all strains of flu, that will no doubt revolutionise improvement to human health and disease intensively. I have always been particularly interested in human and animal biology; a Biological Sciences taster course opened my eyes to a number of fascinating sub-fields such as evolutionary and behavioural ecology, which I would very much look forward to studying. My studies at A-level have all contributed to my eagerness to go on to further academic study. A2 Biology has further motivated me to take my knowledge to more advanced levels; I am especially fascinated in the classification, selection and evolution topic that I am currently studying. For instance, the naming of species using the binomial system has shown me the complexity and attention to detail of organising taxonomic ranks. I recently enjoyed a residential trip to Dorset to investigate sand dune succession. It was a brilliant opportunity to work with professional ecologists on fieldwork and further research. I have enjoyed focusing on the application of Chemistry to the world around us, like the importance of atoms and elements in relation to the behaviour of materials, and their reactions to create molecules essential for everyday life. I have developed numerical skills in Maths that have given me the ability to approach my work in a technical and methodological manner, for example the solving of algebra has helped me to solve quantitative problems in Biology and Chemistry. My AS level History course has enabled me to appreciate a totally different field of study, which improved my ability to express my ideas and knowledge coherently. Last year, I was selected to be a member of the Next Generation Science programme in school. This involved a tour of 'EADS Astrium Ltd' space technology firm in Hertfordshire, in addition to a visit to Delft University of Technology and the 'Delta works' centre in the Netherlands. It was an excellent opportunity to learn from top scientists from various fields, as well as working with the Dutch NGS students. Throughout Year 12, I was involved in a "Fulcrum Challenge" that gave me numerous opportunities to build on my leadership skills and personal strengths. The challenge involved working as a member of a team to construct the first stage of a school library, in a small Tanzanian village. Prior to travelling there, I had to organise events in order to raise enough money for the expedition. The journey allowed me to explore the contrasts and similarities between their culture and ours. I also thoroughly enjoyed and benefited from the physical challenges necessary to take part, as well as working with the team towards our goals. I was appointed as the environmental senior prefect, allowing me to take an active part in improving the school community. Present environmental issues are very important to me; I am specifically interested in the alarming decline of honey bees and the environmental implications. This is one of the projects the environmental team intend to research and act on. All in all, I believe that Biological Sciences is the course for me and I am passionate and excited to study at university. This course appeals to my inquisitive nature, as it would fulfil my desire to continuously expand my knowledge and understanding of all living things and new discoveries. A career in Biology will give me endless opportunities to research the fascinating world we live in, and I hope to be able to make a contribution to future biological progress.

Example of a Personal Statement for Dentistry

Having had orthodontic treatment in my early teens, I realised the importance of a good and healthy smile. This encouraged me to look further into Dentistry and now having spent 5 months, two days a week, at work experience at a Dental Surgery and having attended a number of related courses, I am now convinced that I would like to study for a degree in Dentistry.

I carried out my work experience at a Dental Surgery which offered both NHS and private treatment. This gave me the excellent opportunity to shadow various staff members at the surgery. Also, I learnt about the pros and cons of private and NHS dental care and gained an understanding of the problems relating to the NHS contract. I gained insight into the type of equipment put to use and learnt about how the use of dental technology has improved over the years, for example the use of probes to evaluate how healthy gums are and potentially identify a gum disease. At the Materials in Dentistry course I attended, I also learnt about the replacement of potentially toxic amalgam fillings to more benign composite ones. I had the chance to make a Glass ionomer filling and insert it into a mould as you would in a tooth, and cure the filling using blue light. This experience gave me a brief snapshot of a Dentist's duties.

From an early age I knew that my career would revolve around Biology, since it is has always been my favourite subject. The way a risk assessment is carried out and a diagnosis of disease is made has been a major attraction towards dentistry as my favourite module in Biology was Human Health and Disease, where I learnt about the spread and identification of infections. Studying Chemistry has given me a basic knowledge which I will be able to take further in a Dentistry course. The learning of properties of metals, such as those making up an amalgam filling is vital for any dentist. Studying the two subjects together has given me deeper understanding of the concepts involved.

Taking Maths has additionally helped in my understanding of many scientific concepts, especially molar calculations in Chemistry. Maths also taught me how to think logically and apply my knowledge in ways outside of my comfort zone, widening my approach to tackling new questions and problems. Religious Studies raised my awareness to ethical and moral topics, many of which I could relate to my scientific knowledge, for example, abortion and in particular the use of stem cells in disease, an issue very popular in medical and dental research these days.

Apart from my work experience at the Dental Surgery, I also voluntarily worked at a nursing home where I was often left solely in charge of afternoon activities. I also spent two weeks at a special needs school. Both of these opportunities helped me gain confidence in talking to people of such a different age group. Indeed, when I was on work experience at the Dental surgery I observed how the Dentist was treating a girl with learning disabilities, which reminded me of my own time at the special needs school and how important it is for a dentist to be able to work with a diverse group of people.

In my free time I like dancing and have danced publically, for example a school charity event where I choreographed and performed a dance routine. I enjoy researching and reading about dentistry. Learning about new things encourages and strengthens my desire to become

a successful dentist. It is also in my nature to embrace every part of my life including the challenges. I am totally committed to successfully completing a BDS Degree.

Example for Neuroscience

I have always gained immense satisfaction from studying the sciences and applying theory to practice in order to help others is what appeals to me most in my desire to become a scientist. I have a strong desire to study the human body such as the biological underpinnings of the human mind. My A-Level has equipped me with many skills, which are required in the medical world today. Chemistry and Biology have developed my manual dexterity, analytical skills and my ability to carry out experiments accurately. Chemistry has interested me immensely, it has given me the opportunity to learn about reactions and how the human body uses many chemical reactions to function. Biology has extended my knowledge of the medical profession especially through the Human Health and Disease module, which showed me the importance of global communication so that diseases can be fought successfully. In Maths, I have been able to learn how to apply mathematical formulae to a range of practical situations, for example, the analysis of biological data. Studying Mathematics has also made me appreciate the value of a logical process of thinking. Studying Geography is an excellent contrast to my focus on the sciences. Considering a range of issues, such as global challenges and wealth and poverty has given me an excellent opportunity to discuss debate and express myself clearly and concisely. I am confident that the skills I have gained will be useful in my chosen field. As a scientist the nervous system can be studied and researched to find new cures to enhance the lives of those who are lost in the bizarre, inescapable world of neurological disorders. To gain an experience with working with vulnerable people, I have carried out voluntary work at a nursing home. I developed relationships with some of the patients and gained an understanding of challenges associated in caring for the elderly, both physical and psychological, who are more prone to neurological diseases such as Alzheimer's disease. By Volunteering in Northwick Park hospital, I observed different wards, saw patients and had the opportunity to communicate with patients. This opened my eyes to the stages of pain experienced by the patients which brought my attention not only to the physical distress the patient has to go through but also to their psychological distress. My appreciation of this was increased by reading a book by Oliver Sacks, "A Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat". I take part in a mentoring scheme and the reading scheme which has enabled me to advance my knowledge and understanding of the stress an individual can go through. I gained experience with working with children. I developed good communication skills and good problem solving skills through this experience which could be useful in my research. Being part of a Global group and Envision has made me more aware of issues faced by people

around the world. I produced a documentary on the perception of "What is Ugly" which made me more confident in group work. I have held responsibility as a prefect and part of the School Council. Through my volunteering, I have learned to connect with people, tailor my conversational style and content appropriately. For my work experience I attended a one week course, Medex at Imperial College. By doing this, I had the opportunity to visit two different hospitals and observe the doctor while he was with his patients. I also undertook a one day work shadowing in Chelsea and Westminster hospital. I carried out a two week work experience in a dentist, where I had the opportunity to observe the dentist and was able to interact with patients, improving my confidence. I witnessed the close relationship between the patient and the dentist. I have attended a variety of courses and lectures. I have made every effort to gain a relative view of the science based profession and having done so I feel committed to pursuing a career in this field. I believe I will be an asset to your department.

Example of Personal Statement for a Management related course

In life, there are those who inspire while others look for inspiration, those who create and those that wait for the result, those who lead and those who follow. Both are interdependent, but I long for the day that I can be among those who inspire, create and lead. What captivates and lures me into the world of business is the dynamic atmosphere it thrives in, which encourages innovation. It unleashes every new development into society, it is the motor of our economy; hence it is the driver of modern civilisation. I thoroughly enjoy Business Studies, especially macro-economics; it has allowed me to identify the key features of the current economic crisis. Furthermore Chemistry has shown me the discipline of data analysis which will prove invaluable in my chosen course. Prior to chemistry practicals, I am expected to hypothesise, similar to how a manager forecasts an outcome, as well as motivating staff through the setting of targets. Studying Arabic was challenging due to its complex nature. Nevertheless, it has given me an appreciation of poetry and creative writing. These studies have also developed my cultural understanding of the Middle East, and its relation to the world of business through its growing importance politically and economically. Business and Media are indelibly linked, moreover Media is a subject that has fascinated me by its ability to shape the contemporary world around us, with different institutions using propaganda to alter public perception to their advantage. I have relished the intellectual test offered through Government and Politics, allowing my opinions and clarity of expression to mature. The combination of subjects I chose for A-Levels have offered me a sound grounding to engage in a Management orientated degree. My desire for practical business experience was stimulated during a Summer placement at the head office of 'Kout Food Group'. I was part of a team and experienced different approaches to the motivation of staff. At first hand, I witnessed the complexity of a business by working in the Accounts Department and with the company directors. In addition, I also had a part-time role in an electronics company, constructing various financial documents which gave me a 'hands-on' experience and the chance to use the expertise from my studies to develop the company. I enjoy taking part in social activities as well as sporting events. I believe that being actively involved in one's own community helps create a sense of responsibility and belonging. I took part in the Envision programme in which

I supervised the publicity for promoting environmental awareness and charity events. I continually take part in debates as this enhances my communication skills and confidence levels. As a Labour Party member, I am currently producing a report for my MP about issues concerning local residents. Furthermore, I am running as a candidate to be the Councillor in my ward of Barnhill, Wembley. Alongside my academic learning, I greatly enjoy sports as I believe in an Arabic proverb that quotes "A healthy mind comes from within a healthy body". I find that sport greatly builds my fitness, stamina, confidence and courage. I was a member of a boxing club for two years and intermittently captained the school's football team. In addition, I regularly swim, play badminton and tennis. I thoroughly enjoy these activities as I find they help me improve as a team player and discipline me to deal with demanding situations accordingly. I aim to expand my academic horizons in the field of Management, while I recognise studying this course would be a challenge at times; I am committed to this discipline. I believe I would make an active contribution to your university both academically and socially.

4.4 Completing your UCAS form

Applicants now use the web-based UCAS APPLY system. This has been designed to be as user friendly as possible, with drop-down menus and help options at every step of the way. The form cannot usually be submitted before 1st September 2016, but you can of course enter information into the system before this.

What you will need to know when you fill in UCAS APPLY

Make sure you have the following information to hand.

- Your school's buzzword, ask Mr. Cox or your Tutor for this.
- What London borough you live in.
- Your fee code (normally 02).
- Dates of your school attendance from the age of eleven (to the nearest month).
- Details of exams taken or to be taken (you will need to know the exam centre name and number, exam board and grade for each exam).
- Your personal statement (your school will tell you how to place the statement on UCAS APPLY – make sure you find out).
- Payment details (you can pay by credit/debit card or through the school).

- Your five course choices (for each course you must know the course code and college code, which you can find in the course search section of the UCAS website).

Getting started

- Go to www.ucas.com and click on apply.
- Register using your school buzzword.
- You will then be issued with a user name and password. Do not lose this.

Making consistent choices

The following is an acceptable list of choices:

Electronic engineering	Brunel Uni
Electrical and electronic engineering	City
Electronic and electrical engineering	Kings
Electronic and electrical engineering	QM
Electronic and electrical engineering	UCL

Why? Because nobody will be in any doubt about what you want to do and your personal statement will be straightforward in expressing your interest in engineering.

This is also acceptable:

English	Goldsmiths
English	Kings
English and history	QM
English with history	London Met
English and history	Royal Holloway

Why? The core theme running through these choices is English. History is very compatible with English, so it will be perfectly easy to express your interest in your personal statement.

This is also acceptable:

Management studies	Brunel
Business studies	City
Management studies	Kings
Business studies	Kingston
Management studies	LSE

Why? Management and business studies are very similar, just with different titles. One of the few differences is that business studies courses are more likely to contain a sandwich year. In your personal statement it will be acceptable to say that you are interested in both business and management studies.

This is *not* acceptable:

Nursing	City
Philosophy	Heythrop College
Nursing	Kings

Philosophy
Philosophy

Kings
London Met

Why? Not because you have applied for two courses at the same university, but because the admissions tutor would not know what you are most interested in doing. Do you want to spend the next three years of your life studying nursing or philosophy? It shows a lack of commitment to a particular subject, which will be obvious in your personal statement.

5. Applying to Oxbridge / Medicine / Dentistry / Veterinary Science

If you apply to Oxford, Cambridge or for Medicine, Dentistry or Veterinary Science at any university, key staff will work closely with you to guide you with your application and preparation for interview. It is important to be sure **why** you want to apply to either of these universities. Make sure you speak to them in the Summer Term.

What makes Oxford and Cambridge Universities different?

- The quality of the educational experience. You will be taught by the leaders in their fields and, in return, you will have to push yourself to achieve the very high levels of work that they expect. Remember, though, that there is academic excellence at other universities as well.
- More teaching will be done individually. Remember too, however, that you will be expected to be a self-starter and to work independently.
- Whatever degree you do, your career prospects will be very good. You will gain a certain level of respect from employers simply because of the university you went to (though this effect diminishes as your career goes on).
- Colleges are normally friendly places, in pleasant surroundings. Accommodation provision is often very good.
- Oxbridge colleges still have a better level of funding than other universities.

The college system

- Oxford University has twenty-nine colleges. Cambridge University has twenty-five colleges. Don't be put off by some idiosyncratic pronunciations. Magdalene College, for example, is pronounced *maud-lin*.
- **Lectures** are taught by the university. English lectures, for example, will be taught at the university's English faculty.
- **Tutorials** (at Oxford) and **supervisions** (at Cambridge) involve being taught individually or in small groups at your college.
- You live, eat and socialize at your college.
- Cambridge colleges, on the whole, will find you accommodation for three years. Oxford colleges vary. Some will ask you to go into the private rented sector in the second year.
- It is unusual for two people from the same school to apply for the same subject at the same college.

Points to consider when choosing a college at Oxbridge

- Does the college offer accommodation for the duration of the course?
- Does the college have a fellow or director of studies in your subject?
- Research the college that interests you most, but don't become too attached – you may be pooled and offered a place at another college.
- *You cannot apply to both Oxford and Cambridge.*

What are Oxford and Cambridge looking for?

- Generally, Oxbridge colleges select students who are **extremely** interested and enthusiastic about the subject they are applying for, and who have the evidence to prove it.
- For most science subjects you will need AAA at A level. For most arts subjects you will need AAA or AAB. Remember that most successful candidates are bright and very, very, very hard working – they are not usually geniuses!
- As with all universities, Oxbridge colleges offer places *before* A-level results come out, they consider the following when selecting candidates:
 - AS-level results (or UMS scores) - **definitely**
 - Predicted A-level grades - **definitely**
 - Module results - **possibly**
 - Your school reference - **definitely**
 - GCSE results - **definitely**
 - School work that they may ask you to send in - **possibly**
 - Your performance at interview - **definitely**
 - Work that they may ask you to do when you go for interview – **very likely**
 - Additional tests / STEP papers (see chapter 6 on additional tests) – **very likely**
- For Medicine, Dentistry or Veterinary Science, the standard offer is AAA or sometimes AAB. You **must** have completed relevant work experience.

What to do if you want to apply

- For Oxbridge, Medicine, Dentistry or Veterinary Science, you must apply by
- For Oxbridge, you must complete an additional form and select a college or make an 'Open application'.
- You will need to start preparing yourself for the application process, particularly the interviews. General preparation might include discussion of philosophical issues and improving your critical thinking skills. Specific preparation would include: subject-based background reading; more practice of your subject; wide general reading.
- If you are unsure about an Oxbridge application for financial reasons, note that both universities and the colleges have access to extra funds, which they can pass on to you (for example, from the Isaac Newton Trust).
- If you are very hard working and enthusiastic about your subject, you will be encouraged and supported. Staff will be able to advise you and help you with your application. If you would like to discuss whether or not you should apply to Oxford or Cambridge, please speak to her. Similarly, if you are considering applying to study Medicine, Dentistry or Veterinary Science, please discuss this with your Tutor and Head of Sixth Form.
- For further information visit www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/ and www.cam.ac.uk/cambuniv/undergrad/ (watch the online film "Interviews in action").

6. Additional tests

With more and more applicants gaining the highest A-level grades, universities are finding it hard to sort the “very good” from the “good”. Admissions tutor will take into account UCAS personal statements, but how can they be sure that these are solely the work of the students (who may have been helped by their parents or schools)? School references, too, are so overwhelmingly positive that most applicants seem wonderful.

Some universities, therefore, are looking for some form of additional test to help them decide who will be able to cope with the rigours of their degrees. Do not be frightened of these tests. All you can do is your best and to try to prepare for them in the time that you have available. Below are examples of current additional tests set by universities. In the future there may be one single additional test.

New tests are being introduced all the time including a new TSA at UCL for European and Social Studies.

BMAT test (bio-medical admissions test)

This is for applicants to medicine at Cambridge, Imperial (plus some other degrees), Oxford (plus Physiology) and UCL and applicants for veterinary science at Cambridge and the Royal Veterinary College. It is taken at school as a public examination in November. It involves:

- a sixty-minute test of general aptitudes and skills;
- a thirty-minute test of science knowledge (based on GCSE science – supposedly!);
- a thirty-minute writing task (an AS in critical thinking would be useful).

You can look at examples of the tests on www.bmat.org.uk

You will be asked to register for BMAT through the school

UKCAT

For entry to some Medicine and Dentistry Schools – separate to BMAT.

Looks to test mental ability:

Problem solving

Logical reasoning

Critical thinking

Information management

There is no science paper, the tests are not curriculum based, examples will appear on website.

Dentistry

Cardiff, Dundee, Glasgow, Kings College London, Manchester, Newcastle, Queen Mary and Sheffield.

Medicine

Aberdeen, Brighton and Sussex, Cardiff, Dundee, Durham, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Hull and York, Keele, Kings College London, Leeds, Leicester, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham, Peninsula, Queen Mary, University of East Anglia, St Andrews, St George’s, Sheffield and Southampton.

Visit: www.ukcat.ac.uk

You don't take this test at school – you have to register for it and take it at an independent test centre. See the web-site for more details.

STEP

This is used for applicants for maths at Cambridge and Warwick Universities. It involves searching questions to test insight, originality, grasp of broader issues and the ability to use standard techniques in unusual ways and situations. Candidates taking maths A level will take papers one and two. Candidates taking double maths will take papers two and three.

It is important to speak to Mr Owens in the Summer term if you think you may have to take the STEP exam. Application is through the school. For copies of past papers go to: <http://www.admissionstests.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/adt/>. A word of warning though: when you get the past papers you will find, particularly from the earlier years, that the questions are a good deal harder than you would expect. Don't be misled by this. They are hard for everybody. OCR produce an excellent booklet containing worked solutions to forty-two STEP-type questions.

Cambridge University

Thinking skills assessment

This is used by many Cambridge colleges, for applicants to computing, natural sciences, engineering and economics. It is expected that more colleges will use this test for more subjects in the future. It is now also used as part of the Oxford University PPE test (see below).

Most questions are based on problem-solving and critical thinking. If you go to you can do a short trial test or a timed, ninety-minute test with fifty questions which replicates the real thing. <http://www.admissionstests.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/adt/>

Cambridge University: **modern languages assessment test**

Applicants for modern and medieval languages (MML) are asked to sit a test at interview. This is a standardized test for all colleges. The test involves reading a short passage in English and answering some questions about it in one of the modern languages you plan to study at Cambridge.

Cambridge University: additional tests set by colleges

Depending on which subject you apply for at which college, you may have to take an additional test when you go for interview. You need to check the "Assessment and applications" section of the prospectus and double check with the college you are applying to, to see if you will have to take a test.

For example, students applying for classics may be asked to translate a brief unseen passage of Latin or ancient Greek (if they are already taking an A level in one of these languages). Students without either language may be asked to do a language aptitude test.

For English, applicants may be asked to sit a written test involving two short literary texts for commentary and comparison. The aim is to assess the clarity and sharpness of candidates' writing when confronted with passages that may be unfamiliar to them.

Law admissions test - LNAT

This test was used at:

Birmingham, Bristol, Cambridge, Durham, Exeter, Glasgow, King's College London, Nottingham, Oxford and UCL.

This year some universities may opt OUT of this test. See the web-site for the most up to date information. This is mostly a test of critical thinking and comprehension. Visit www.lnat.ac.uk

Oxford University: Tests taken at interview

At Oxford there are additional test for certain subjects, regardless of which college you are applying for. There are written tests in:

Classics

Economics and management (now do PPE test – see below)

Experimental psychology

Modern languages

PPP (psychology, philosophy and physiology)

Oxford University: External tests

Oxford History Aptitude Test

The HAT is a test of skills, not substantive historical knowledge. It is designed so that candidates should find it equally challenging, regardless of what period(s) they have studied or what school examinations they are taking.

http://www.history.ox.ac.uk/prosundergrad/applying/hat_introduction.htm

Oxford Physics Test

This is an external test, normally taken on the same day as the BMAT and HAT. For more details go to:

www.physics.ox.ac.uk/admissions

English Literature Admissions Test

All students applying for the following courses at the University of Oxford are required to take the English Literature Admissions Test:

- English Language & Literature
- English & Modern Languages
- Classics & English

Please note that candidates for History & English are required to take the History Admissions Test (HAT) and not the ELAT.

www.elat.org.uk

The Admissions Test for Mathematics, Joint Degrees and Computer Science

As part of the admissions process an Entrance Test is taken by students who are applying for Mathematics, the three joint degrees with Computer Science, Philosophy, Statistics and for Computer Science.

This test will be set in school rather than at Oxford University.

<http://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/prospective-students/undergraduate/specimen-tests/index.shtml>

Philosophy, Politics and Economics Test – TSA Oxford

This has two parts. Firstly the applicant takes the Thinking Skills Assessment (see above) and secondly takes a written test.

For key date, registration and other information:

<http://www.tsa.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/ppe/>

7. Interviews

Interviews are still happening in large numbers and students should be prepared for them. In fact, in the case of degree courses that train for a specific career, applicants are highly likely to be interviewed. Some universities still interview *all* applicants who make it past the initial selection process. At Norwood Sixth Form we consider it essential that you are thoroughly prepared for an interview. In fact, much of enrichment and tutor time in the second half of the Autumn Term in Year 13 is dedicated to training you in interview techniques.

NB: Applicants for Oxford, Cambridge, Medicine and Dentistry will always be interviewed. During enrichment/tutor time sessions you will be withdrawn for specific training and practice by selected staff. It is essential that you attend all of these sessions.

7.1 General preparation and personal presentation

Points to remember

- The fact that you have been invited for an interview means that the university is interested in you, so that is half your battle won.
- In any interview, as in any conversation, there should be a two-way interaction. Make sure you participate and contribute.
- An interview can last anything between ten minutes and an hour (but most are about 15 minutes).
- Interviews are usually conducted by one interviewer, but there could be two, three or even four of them.
- There is no such thing as the perfect interview.
- You will be assessed on the **way you think** and your ability to cope with the “unanswerable question”.

Preparation

- Make sure you participate fully in all the Careers & Wellbeing (PHSE) sessions run on interview technique.
- Read carefully any material that is sent to you before the interview, so that you know what to expect when you get there.
- Reread the university prospectus and details about the course.
- Have a mock interview.
- Photocopy or print off your personal statement and reread this thoroughly before the interview.
- Prepare some questions you may want to ask. Make sure they have not already been answered in information you have been sent by the university.
- Plan your journey. If an overnight stay is involved, plan for this as well. Do *not* be late or in a rush.

Presentation

- If you are applying for a vocational degree (for example, medicine or hotel management) dress smartly and appropriately.
- For most degrees, dress in clothing that you feel comfortable with, and that will not distract the interviewer from the points you want to make.
- Do *not* chew gum – whatever course you are applying for!
- Take your lead from the interviewer when it comes to sitting down, handshakes, starting to talk etc.
- Make eye-contact – work on this!
- Think about what your body language is conveying. Do *not* sit slumped in your seat wearing a baseball cap! It is important to engage with the interviewer from the start.
- When it comes to handshakes, sitting down, starting to talk, and so on, take your lead from the interviewer.
- Work on making eye contact, regulating your voice levels and putting across an appropriate level of friendliness and warmth.

7.2 Preparing for interviews: your chosen subject

The greater part of an interview will be devoted to questions about the subject you have chosen. You need to think beforehand about the kinds of questions you will be asked, and how you will answer them. Remember that interviewers will be trying to discover:

- why you have applied for a particular course;
- how much you already know about the subject you have chosen;
- whether you have the aptitude and thinking skills to learn more;
- whether you have thought about what the degree course will involve.

Every year, UCL run an interview practice session in autumn half term. Make sure you get an application form when they become available. **Listen in assembly and tutor time!**

The 'Universities Interviews Guide' (by Barbara Hamnett and Andy Gardner) contains sample questions for most subject areas. Please ask in the LRC.

Sample interview questions for a degree in Architecture

- *Why do you want to study architecture? How long have you wanted to be an architect?*
- *Architecture is an underpaid and overworked profession, so why do you want to go into it?*
- *Schools of architecture each have their own strengths and specialities. Why did you choose to apply to study architecture at this particular university?*
- *Are there any buildings that have particularly influenced you?*
- *Do you have a favourite contemporary architect? Who is it and why?*
- *Describe a building that you like, of any style or period.*
- *What do you know about the architectural styles of the 18th and 19th centuries, i.e. neoclassicism, the Gothic revival and romantic architecture?*
- *Describe the front of St Paul's Cathedral in London.*
- *Have you read any books about architecture? Which ones?*

- *How have you tried to broaden your knowledge and understanding of architecture?*
- *Do you think your A levels are relevant to studying architecture?*
- *What do you think about Prince Charles and the modern/post-modern debate in architecture?*
- *Do you think that the redevelopment of the Docklands area in London has been successful?*
- *How do you think office blocks should be designed?*
- *Do you have anything against buildings showing their structures outwardly?*
- *Finland has a much higher percentage of women architects than Britain. Why do you think that is?*
- *Why are you interested in landscape architecture?*
- *Do you think community landscaping is important and why?*

8. Responding to offers from UCAS

All the universities and colleges on your UCAS APPLY entry have to make a decision one way or the other about whether to make you an offer. Once all the institutions on your list have come to a decision, UCAS will inform you through the UCAS TRACK service, detailing the offers you have been made.

At this stage, you have to make some crucial decisions about which offers to accept. Consider your replies very carefully. The decisions you make now are binding – you cannot change your mind at a later stage, for example when your results come out in August (N.B. see further on 8.2 –Adjustment Period, as there has been a change in procedure).

What you need to know

- The only *official* offers are those sent to you by UCAS through TRACK. Any verbal or written offers from individual institutions cannot be considered as confirmed until you have heard from UCAS.
- You may receive offers without interviews but, if you do, you will almost certainly be invited to open days. You may well want to attend an open day before deciding whether to accept an offer.
- Your offers will almost certainly be conditional on your A-level, AS-level or AGCE results. Conditions may be stated in terms of exam grades or as a tariff score (see the tariff table in section 3.6). An offer may include conditions about GCSE maths or GCSE English language.
- There are three responses you can make to the offers you receive:
 - Firm acceptance
 - Insurance acceptance
 - Decline all offers
- You can hold two offers, one as firm acceptance, the other as insurance. Or you can firmly accept just one offer at the place you most want to go to. If you satisfy the conditions of your “firm acceptance” offer in August then this is the course and institution you will attend.

- An insurance acceptance should normally be for an offer at lower grades or tariff score than your firm acceptance. Remember – if you do not make the grades for your *firm* acceptance, but satisfy the conditions for your *insurance* acceptance, then you are *committed to going to the university you accepted as insurance*. It is therefore important to think very carefully about which offer you accept as insurance.
- If you decline all offers you will be eligible for clearing in August, and possibly for UCAS Extra.
- If you have any doubts about what to do, take advice.
- Through the TRACK service UCAS will state the date by which you have to respond. This will be personal to you. The deadline for responding is likely to be in April or May, but UCAS will usually allow an extension into June, especially if you have some interviews to attend.

8.1 UCAS Extra

UCAS Extra was introduced in 2003, and enables applicants to make an additional choice of university course. It is aimed at two types of applicant:

- those who have not received any offers;
- those who are “non-committed” for any other reason.

These applicants no longer have to wait until clearing to find a course to suit them.

The scheme will operate from the end of February to the end of June . If an applicant is eligible to use Extra, a button will appear on their TRACK service. They can then apply for one course at a time using Track.

The aim of UCAS Extra is to reduce the numbers who use clearing.

8.2 What happens when you get your A-level or Btec results?

Let us imagine that you have applied through the UCAS system. You have just taken three A levels. You are holding a firm conditional offer of BCC and an insurance conditional offer of CCD. You could be faced with a number of scenarios. (We expect the principles outlined below to apply also with the new tariff system.)

Scenario 1: You exceed everybody’s expectations You were aiming for BCC yet you get AAB. If this happens to you (and it is a rare occurrence) you are still committed to both your firm and insurance choices *for this year’s entry*. Most people who fall into this category take a year out and apply again in the light of their unexpectedly good A-level results. If you had made a deferred application, then you have a few weeks to withdraw after receiving your results and you can apply again the following year.

Please be aware of the new **adjustment period**

- A 5 day ‘adjustment window’ in August has been agreed
- From 20-31 August, eligible applicants will be able to look for an alternative course that has places available whilst still holding their original choice
- Estimated that from the 500,000 or so applying annually the number of applicants utilising this process would be in the hundreds

- Full details of this will be available nearer time
- Applicant receives results and firm choice confirmed
- 5 day window from 20-31 August, initiated through Track
- Results 'better' than required by conditional offer
- Applicant looks at available 'aspirational' courses
- Contact HEI to discuss new application
- Receive new offer of place or remain with original firm choice

Scenario 2: You get what you expected You get BCC. You do not have to do anything for a while. The university knew your A-level results approximately four days before you did. They will soon write to you confirming your place and giving you your joining details.

Scenario 3: Near miss (the nightmare scenario) You get CCC and you needed BCC. You have not met the conditions of your firm offer. You should telephone the university immediately. When you finally get through (be patient) they will say one of four things:

- "Don't worry, we are still going to take you."
- "You are rejected." You will have to go to your insurance university. If you have no insurance place then you will automatically enter clearing.
- "We haven't made our minds up yet and could take up to a week to decide, but no longer than that." If you have an insurance place, then you know you have this to fall back on. If you do not have an insurance place, this presents you with a dilemma: do you hang around and wait, thereby missing the best places in clearing, or do you ask to be rejected so that you can go into clearing? Circumstances can be different depending on subject so please seek advice.
- "We are going to offer you an alternative course." You do not have to accept this. It may be a very good course that is just right for you or it could be a disaster waiting to happen. Again, please seek advice. Do not be rushed into any snap decisions.

It is worth remembering that, if you are holding a CF (Conditional Firm) or CI (Conditional Insurance) offer, universities should try to let you know their decisions by the Thursday following the publication of A-level results.

Scenario 4: You miss by a long way You get DEE! We can be fairly sure you will be rejected and you can enter clearing. Unless of course you were applying for science or engineering courses – strange things can happen here, you may get some form of alternative offer.

8.3 Going through clearing

Clearing is the system that matches students without a place to university courses with vacancies.

Who is it for?

- If you applied to UCAS but you do not hold any conditional offers, then you will automatically be allowed to enter clearing.
- If you had conditional offers, but you were rejected because you failed to make the required grades, you will automatically be allowed to enter clearing.
- If you did not apply to UCAS but you decide, after receiving your A-level results that you would like to go to university, then you still have to go through UCAS APPLY to enter clearing.

How does it work?

- Clearing now starts the day A-level results are known.
- It is your responsibility to find out about vacancies, contact the universities and ask them if they will accept you.
- You may get a number of positive responses, but the most important thing is that you only click on the one university that you really want to go to.

How do I find out about vacancies?

- The *Independent*, *Guardian* and other daily papers.
- The website www.ucas.com provides an excellent vacancy service.
- University websites.
- The adverts that most universities place in a range of newspapers.

What if I want to retake my A levels?

- You need to discuss this with a member of the 6th Form Management team

What if I need more advice?

It is most important that you do not make any rash decisions. Advice will be on hand at school when you receive your results.

9. Student finance

Updated information as it changes can be found with your Tutor.

There are three main things that concern us with student finance:

- What the student finance arrangements are
- How you apply
- Student budgeting

The student needs to be aware of:

- Fees
- Loans (loans for fees and loans for maintenance)
- Grant (for students from lower income families)
- Repayments
- Bursaries

9.1 Student finance for university entrance. What the government says:

The most up to date information is currently for students starting in 2016.

If you're starting a full-time higher education course in 2016, the main types of financial help you may be able to get are:

- a Student Loan for Tuition Fees to cover your fees in full up to £9,250
- a Student Loan for Maintenance - worth up to £11,682 if you live away from home, or more if you study in London
- a bursary from your university or college – See grantfairly.com

All the information you require is at:

www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance

Other financial help:

Dance and Drama Awards (DADA)

The student interested in dance and drama may need to know about separate funding arrangements at 20 private dance and drama colleges.

www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/14To19/MoneyToLearn/DanceandDrama

National Health Service bursaries for health professional courses

NHS bursaries are available for full-time or part-time pre-registration courses in England and Wales in the following subjects;

Chiropody, dental hygiene, dental therapy, dietetics, occupational therapy, orthoptics, physiotherapy, prosthetics & orthotics (England only), radiography, speech and language therapy, Midwifery, nursing

To be eligible for an NHS bursary you must be accepted for an NHS-funded place.

Financial Help for Healthcare Students:

<http://www.nhsstudentgrants.co.uk/>

9.2 How to apply for financial support

The process

It is now presumed that most applicants will apply for their student finance through the TRACK part of UCAS Apply where they will be directed to the student finance website.

Otherwise apply online through www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance

Residency status

A student is eligible for financial support (both loans and help with tuition fees) if he or she:

- is a UK citizen and has had “ordinary residence” in the UK for three years immediately before the start of the course;
- has full refugee status (but has not necessarily been in the UK for three years or more);
- has “exceptional leave” to remain or “settled status” (must have been in the UK for three years) with an original letter from the Home Office confirming this;
- is an EU national with “settled status” (to get this, you must have held a residency permit for four years).

EU Nationals who do not have “settled status” or a residency permit for four years, will *not* be eligible for a loan. They may, however, get means-tested support for fees.

Asylum seekers are not eligible for support (unless they have been in the UK for three years and have “indefinite” or “exceptional” leave to remain).

9.3 Student budgeting: where does the money go?

The information about costs in this section has been taken from *Students' Money Matters 07*.

So how much is it going to cost you to be a student? You need to take into account:

- tuition fees;
- accommodation;
- other living expenses.

Fees

The amount will vary from course to course and university to university. You will be able to take out a student loan to cover the fees, and bursaries may be available to lower-income students.

Accommodation

This will be the single biggest drain on your finances! It could soak up half of your income, or more than three-quarters of your income if you have full board in university accommodation.

Finding the right place to live is important, especially in your first year. It can affect your whole attitude to your college, your course, the town or city where you are staying, the people you meet and how well you do. So what are your options? Basically, you can live either in university accommodation or in privately rented accommodation (unless you choose a local university, in which case you can stay at home).

University accommodation

Most institutions give first-year students first claim on halls of residence. Costs vary between different types of university accommodation – the main choice is between self-catering and full or half board.

Some points to think about when considering university accommodation

- Living in university rooms can work out cheaper because: you have no gas or electricity bills; you are only paying rent during term-time; you don't risk losing your deposit to an unscrupulous landlord.
- Are the rooms shared?
- What facilities are provided?
- What is the distance from college? What is transport like?

Privately rented accommodation

Most students brave the outside world at some point! Freedom is the watchword, away from hall of residence wardens and without the rules and regulations of institutional living (no noise after 11pm, breakfast at 8am, etc.). Rents for private accommodation vary enormously. The following shows average termly rents for non-university accommodation (by region).

London	£1800	Wales	£900
South	£1250	East Anglia	£900
North	£800		
Scotland	£900		

Some points to think about when renting privately

- When going private, the best way to avoid problems is to take care what you are doing in the first place. Look early, and get any help your university or students' union can give you.
- Watch out for massive deposits which sap your start-of-term cash.
- Watch out for broken or dangerous services (eg. boilers, gas fires).
- Using a reputable renting agency may avoid some of these problems but the only real cure for a dodgy landlord is to move.

Other living expenses

- **Food** Once you have a roof over your head, the next major expense could be food. Prices in university cafes vary a lot. The cheapest way of feeding yourself is definitely to cook your own food. Look out for markets, where food is cheaper, or cheaper supermarkets. Forget about fast food and microwave dinners – they are very pricey! In 2013, the average student spent £408 per term on food.
- **Socializing and entertainment** You can often spend a lot on socializing, especially in the first few weeks of term: going to the bar, joining clubs, etc. is a way of meeting people. Students spend around £295 per term on this.
- **Books** All students say that they spend more on books in the first year than at any other time. Always: try to use the library rather than buy books; check out second-hand bookshops; contact second/third-year students who may be selling books; check with your tutor so that you only buy absolute essentials. The average figure is around £147 on books per term.
- **Course equipment** This depends on your course. Check with the department when you go for interview, or ask at higher-education fairs and open days. For courses where you have to buy your own equipment, costs can exceed £200 per year. The average is £95 per term
- **Field trips** This tends to hit geography, biology and zoology students the most, where it is often a compulsory component of the course. Check with the department when you go for interview, or ask at higher-education fairs and open days. Costs can be anywhere between £40 and £1000 per year.
- **Travel** London-based students spend the most money (and time) on travel. If you are studying in a town or smaller city, you may have no travel costs at all if you can walk or even cycle everywhere. Many students complain about bus services. Find out about cost, services and safety at your interview, or ask at higher-education fairs and open days.
- **Internet** On average, students spend £35 per term.
- **Mobile phones** On average £90 per term
- **Clothing** On average, £130 per term

How students budget around the country

The table below shows what students spend in different parts of the country (based on figures from *Students' Money Matters 07*).

Other issues about cash and accommodation

- Students in the south-east – but studying outside London – can find that money is tight because they may pay London-equivalent rents but do not get the larger student loan offered to London students.
- Students report that, on the whole, accommodation off campus is easy to find. However, there may be high competition for good accommodation near to the university (where there are no travel costs).
- More students are applying for access funds and hardship loans to get help with living costs. Some may get £500-£600, but you need to apply early – funds tend to run out by the second term.

10. Employment prospects for graduates

This handbook concentrates mostly on choosing your higher education course and on issues related to the duration of the course. But what about afterwards? What type of job will you get from the degree that you have done?

"A degree alone is not enough. Employers are looking for more than just technical skills and knowledge of a degree discipline. They particularly value skills such as communication, team working and problem solving. Job applicants who can demonstrate that they have developed these skills will have a real advantage."

Digby Jones - Director-General, Confederation of British Industry.

"21st century graduates need to demonstrate to employers that they can 'hit the ground running'. In addition to working hard to gain a good degree, students should engage in extra curricular activities and obtain work experience in order to develop skills that will make them better prepared for the world of work. It is also important for students to become self aware and develop the confidence to market themselves effectively when the time comes to apply for jobs."

Carl Gilleard – Chief Executive, Association of Graduate Recruiters.

10.1 Types of graduate occupation

There are now four major types of graduate occupation:

Traditional graduate occupations

- Description; the established professions for which, historically, the normal route has been via an undergraduate degree programme.
- Examples; barristers, doctors, HE and secondary education teachers, research biochemists

Modern graduate occupations

- Description; the newer professions, particularly in management, IT and creative vocational areas which graduates have been entering since educational expansion in the 1960's.
- Examples; accountants, computer programmers, primary school teachers, journalists

New graduate occupations

- Description; areas of employment, many in new or expanding occupations, where the route into the professional area has recently changed such that it is now via an undergraduate degree programme.
- Examples; marketing managers, physiotherapists, computer games designers

Niche graduate occupations

- Description; occupations where the majority of incumbents are not graduates, but within which there are stable or growing specialist niches which require higher education skills and knowledge.
- Examples; leisure centre managers, hotel managers, nursing, retail managers

Looking to the future.....

- Proportion of graduates in the labour force will continue to rise steadily.
- The demand for graduate skills and knowledge is projected to grow.
- Shortages of high-level technical skills are likely to continue i.e. Building Services, Medicine.
- Graduates are likely to displace non-graduates in competition for new graduate jobs. Gendered boundaries in graduate employment becoming less distinct - work/life balance policies will become more important.

●

Class of 99 Institute of Employment Studies

N.B the recession will now obviously have an impact on these predictions, however we are not sure what the situation will be like in 5 years time.

10.2 Vocational and non-vocational courses

- Many people do courses with a clear vocational link, for example, primary teacher training, health career training (radiography, nutrition, medicine, nursing, etc.) or electronic engineering. Their chances of getting a job in their field range from the very good to the very, very good.
- Some people will do courses with a vocational link (for example, psychology and law) but the possibility of getting a job in these fields will not be so assured. Factors such as original A-level results, determination and work experience could all play a part. However, people may use a degree such as law or psychology as a springboard to other career areas.
- You can also do a degree course that gives you a general vocational grounding, but which can lead on to a number of career options. For example, business/management studies can lead to jobs in accountancy, marketing, human resources management or IT.
- There are now many vocational degrees related to creative industries, such as the media and music. We would argue that most people get jobs in these industries through work experience, having a contact or getting a very junior position and working their way up, rather than as a result of the degree they have done. Your main reason for doing one of these degrees must be that you are interested in the content of the course.
- An enormous number of undergraduates study a degree course simply because they are interested in it, even though it may have no obvious vocational link (for example, philosophy, history or physics). Yet the vast majority of these students graduate and get jobs which they are happy with.

- Work experience In a survey, nearly half of graduates from the arts and humanities obtained their current job through relevant work experience in a similar organization. Work experience was perceived to be a crucial key to the labour market among those interviewed. Many felt that when they left higher education they were not “work ready” because they lacked basic workplace experience (particularly those who graduated with non-vocational degrees).
- According to the Pay and Progression for Graduates 2005 survey of 96 employers from the Incomes Data Services (IDS), over a third (37.4%) of students who did a sandwich placement went on to accept a position with the employer they did their placement with. The equivalent figure for those who did vacation work was even higher at 47%. A further pointer to the advantage of work experience in gaining a graduate position has been revealed through research of some 66 graduate employers by the University of Manchester and UMIST Careers Service in 2004. Their research shows that an average of 70% of work experience Summer or year long placements lead to a graduate job offer.

The information above has been based on:

DfEE-CSU-AGCAS-IER Moving on – graduate careers three years after graduation; and CSU-AGCAS-IER Working out – graduates’ early experiences of the labour market. What do graduates do? 2006. For more information visit www.prospects.ac.uk.

10.3 Other factors to consider

The future of work

- Working older – Average life expectancy in US and Europe in 1900 was 47, in 2050 it will be 90.
- Most will have at least two careers and seven jobs.
- Thirty years ago we had to learn one new skill a year, now its one new skill a day Taylor and Whacker
- Be aware of the growth of hyphenated careers – edu-tainment, e-learning, bio-informatics
- You will need to have a commitment to lifelong learning.
- Read “Funky Business” Ridderstralle and Nordstrom

The difference between the average lifetime earnings of graduates and non-graduates will probably get smaller

The received wisdom is that as we have more graduates, the difference in average earnings over a lifetime between graduates and non-graduates will get smaller. Recent surveys seem to bear this out. This will be one to watch over the years. It is important not to overstate this “graduate dividend” argument - it was never the only reason for going to higher education and a balanced approach, considering all the factors in making a higher education choice should still be the way forward.

How graduate fast track/blue chip companies/organisations recruit

- Who are they? Law, Accountancy, Investment Banking, Multinationals.

- Methods of recruitment – Very high A Level grades, sometimes type of elite university, often not bothered about degree subject as long as it's deemed as academic and then most importantly your performance at an Assessment Centre.

The growth of postgraduate students

The traditional postgraduate – Secondary School Teacher, Journalist, Solicitor and Clinical Psychologist

There has been a growth in number of students taking a wide variety of postgraduate courses. Students need to know that an undergraduate degree may just be the start.

Reasons for postgraduate study may include:

- I really enjoy my subject
- I need it to pursue my chosen career
- It will make me stand out from the crowd and get me a better job
- I want to convert to a new career area
- I don't know what to do – this will give me more time to decide (not a good reason to undertake more study and incur more debt!)

10.4 The skills employers look for

It is not just your degree that counts. Think about the following qualities.

- willingness to learn
- commitment
- dependability/reliability
- self-motivation
- self-awareness
- self-management
- self-promotion
- self-confidence

- team work
- communication skills (oral and written)
- co-operation
- networking
- drive/energy
- desire to achieve and learn

- problem-solving ability
- action planning
- decision making
- negotiation
- political awareness
- coping with uncertainty
- transferable skills

Where to get these skills

Think about: work experience; being a member of the student council; part-time work; university taster courses/Summer schools; voluntary opportunities; extra-curricular activities; travel or gap year; plus your academic studies. For more information, see *What do graduates do?* at www.prospects.ac.uk.

11. Careers information

11.1 – Apprenticeships – See handbook & the following websites:

<http://www.apprenticeshipguide.co.uk/which-apprenticeship-level-is-right-for-you/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-guide-to-apprenticeships>

11.2 Earning while learning

Not everybody wants to go to full-time university and many more people are questioning the levels of debt incurred. Is there another way? Can you achieve a professional well-paid career without going to full-time university? The answer is, possibly!

Some employers offer a package where you will receive a salary, but can also be put through an organised training programme and take qualifications. These can be called.

On-a-plate programmes

Examples of which include:

BDO Stoy Hayward Accountants – (*Commercial Trainee Scheme, can still gain professional accountancy qualification, you need 280 UCAS Tariff Points plus Grade B GCSE Maths and English*)

www.bdo.co.uk

Waitrose

Barclays Bank

Nursing

Chartered Surveyors Training Trust www.cstt.org.uk

For more details on these sort of programmes go to:

www.careersbox.co.uk

It also can be possible to achieve professional status through a,

Do-it-yourself programme

For example:

Solicitor via Legal Executive www.ilex.org.uk

Step 1

Get yourself a low level administrative job in a solicitors/legal setting

Step 2

When you have proved yourself, ask to train as a legal executive (ILEX)

Step 3

Take ILEX courses – day release/evening class

Step 4

Qualify fully as a Legal Executive

Step 5

Ask employer to start Solicitor training (Law Society)

Other DIY professional training

Marketing (non-grad entry)

Accounting Technician

Independent Financial Advisers

Health and Safety Officer

Sports Coaching

11.3 Careers information and websites

Most careers have an organization to represent them. They will normally have a website which will include information on what the career involves and how you enter it. Most of the information below can be found in much more detail in *The Penguin Careers Guide* by Jan Widmer. Or visit the UK graduates website: www.prospects.ac.uk.

To find out more about the careers that interest you, refer to the relevant websites.

Accountancy

Accountants are concerned with the management of money. There are jobs for accountants interested in the intricacies of accounting procedures, or in high finance, or in general management. Accountancy is also useful for people who intend to become entrepreneurs.

The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales

www.icaew.co.uk

The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants

www.accaglobal.com

The Chartered Institute of Management Accountants

www.cima.global

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy

www.cipfa.org.uk

Actuaries

Actuaries use the theories of probability and statistics to work out risks for pensions and insurance companies.

The Institute of Actuaries

www.actuaries.org.uk

Advertising

Advertising agencies plan, create and place advertisements on behalf of companies and organisations who appoint them to handle their "account".

CAM Foundation

www.camfoundation.com

Institute of Practitioners in Advertising

www.ipa.co.uk

Animals

Veterinary surgeon: Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons

www.rcvs.org.uk

Veterinary nurse: British Veterinary Nursing Association
www.bvna.org.uk

Working with horses: British Horse Society
www.bhs.org.uk

Architecture

Architecture is a multi-disciplinary profession requiring a combination of artistic, technological and sociological expertise. The challenge of architecture is to produce, within a given budget, an aesthetically pleasing design which will stand up to wear and tear and is the kind of building people would like to live or work in.

Royal Institute of British Architects
www.architecture.com

Armed Forces

Army
www.army.mod.uk

Royal Navy
www.royal-navy.mod.uk

Royal Air Force
www.raf.mod.uk

Art and design

There are five main areas of specialization: fine art; graphic design; product/industrial design; interior design; textiles/fashion design.

National Society for Education in Art and Design
www.nsead.org
Design Council
www.designcouncil.org.uk

Banking

There are two main areas: retail and investment.

Retail/personal banking and building societies:

Chartered Institute of Bankers
www.cib.org.uk

Building Societies Association
www.bsa.org.uk

Investment and corporate banking:
London Investment Banking Association
www.liba.org.uk

Building

There are three main levels of work in the building industry: managers, technicians and craftspeople.

Building managers: Chartered Institute of Building
www.ciob.org.uk

Building technicians: Construction Industry Training Board
www.citb.org.uk

Building crafts: Construction Industry Training Board
www.citb.org.uk
Electricians
www.jtlimited.co.uk

Chiropody

The Society for Chiropodists and Podiatrists
www.feetforlife.org

Civil aviation

Air traffic control officer: National Air Traffic Services
www.nats.co.uk

Cabin crew and ground staff: contact individual airlines
eg. www.britishairwaysjobs.com

Civilian pilot: The British Airline Pilots Association
www.balpa.org

Civil service

The civil service exists to administer the business of the government. The work of government departments – and their staff at all levels – is immensely varied.

www.civil-service.gov.uk
www.cabinet-office.gov.uk

Dentistry

Dental surgeon: British Dental Association

www.bda-dentistry.org.uk

General Dental Council

www.gdc-uk.org

Dental hygienist: British Dental Hygienists Association

www.bdha.org.uk

Dental nurse: British Association of Dental Nurses

www.badn.org.uk

Dental technician: Dental Technicians Education and Training Advisory Board

www.dtetab.co.uk

Dietetics

The dietician's skill is to translate the science of nutrition into understandable and practical information about food and health.

British Dietetic Association

www.bda.uk.com

Engineering

The purpose of engineering is the design and manufacture of the "hardware" of life. Engineers have a hand in the creation of anything in use anywhere.

The main areas of engineering are: mechanical engineering; civil engineering;

electrical and electronic engineering; biomedical engineering; chemical engineering; aeronautical engineering.

The above areas of engineering have their own institute websites, which can be found through:

The Engineering Council

www.engc.org.uk

Environmental health officers

Environmental health officers ensure that people are protected from a wide range of hazards in the environment in its widest sense.

Chartered Institute of Environmental Health

www.cieh.org.uk

Fashion and clothing

Everyone knows about fashion designers, but what about pattern cutters, garment technologists, buyers?

www.careers-in-clothing.co.uk

Hair and beauty

Hairdressing and Beauty Industry Authority

www.habia.org.uk

Confederation of International Beauty Therapy and Cosmetology

www.babtac.com

Health services management

Health services managers provide the framework within which patients are treated by doctors and other clinical and paramedical staff.

Institute of Healthcare Management

www.ihm.org.uk

Hotel and catering

Careers include working as hotel managers, professional chefs, receptionists and restaurant managers.

Hospitality Training Federation

www.htf.org.uk

The Hotel and Catering and International Management Association

www.hcima.org.uk

Information technology

Network specialists, software programmers, multimedia specialists and hardware engineers.

British Computer Society

www.bcs.org.uk

Information science

The information specialist has to deal with a range of sources far beyond books and other printed material.

The Library Association

www.la-hq.org.uk

The Institute of Information Scientists

www.iis.org.uk

Insurance

Underwriters, insurance brokers, loss adjusters.

The Chartered Insurance Institute

www.cii.co.uk

Journalism

Newspaper journalism: National Council for the Training of Journalists

www.nctj.com

Magazine journalism: Periodical Training Council

www.ppa.co.uk/ptc

Languages

Interpreting, translating, teaching, languages as a secondary skill with another career.

Institute of Linguists

www.iol.org.uk

Law

Barristers: General Council of the Bar of England and Wales

www.barcouncil.org.uk

Legal executives: Institute of Legal Executives

www.ilex.org.uk

Solicitors: Law Society

www.lawsociety.org.uk

Licensed conveyancers: Council for Licensed Conveyancers

www.conveyancer.org.uk

For general information: the Law Careers Advice Network

www.lcan.csu.ac.uk

Leisure/recreation management

Sport and leisure centres, theme parks, cinemas and theatres.

Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management

www.ilam.co.uk

Institute of Sport and Recreation Management

www.isrm.co.uk

Management

Management is a vast and confusing field, with a vague terminology. It is not so much one structured career as an activity, making the best use of human resources, money, material and equipment in order to achieve a given objective.

The Institute of Management

www.inst.mgt.org.uk

Management consultancy

“The service provided to business, public or other undertakings by an independent

and qualified person or persons in identifying and investigating problems concerned with policy, organisation, procedures and methods; recommending appropriate action and helping to implement those recommendations.”!

Institute of Management Consultants
www.imc.co.uk

Medicine

General practice, hospital service, public health, occupational health, research and teaching.

British Medical Association
www.bma.org.uk

For information on medical schools:
www.chms.ac.uk

Nursery work

Nursery nurses, crèche assistants, nannies.

Council for Awards in Children’s Care and Education
www.cache.org.uk

Nursing

Hospital and community nurses, health visitors and midwives.

NHS careers
www.nhs.uk/careers

Royal College of Nursing
www.rcn.org.uk

Royal College of Midwives
www.midwives.co.uk

Occupational therapy

This could also be called rehabilitation therapy. It is concerned with helping people with physical and mental disorders to live as full a life as possible by overcoming as much as possible the effects of their disability.

College of Occupational Therapy
www.cot.co.uk

Optical work

Optometrist (ophthalmic optician), dispensing optician and orthoptist.

College of Optometrists
www.college-optometrists.org
British Orthoptic Society
www.orthoptics.org.uk

Performing arts

Dance: National Council for Dance Education and Training
www.cdet.org.yk

Drama: National Council for Drama Training
www.ncdt.co.uk
For drama schools:
www.drama.ac.uk

Music: Incorporated Society of Musicians
www.ism.org
British Phonographic Industry
www.bpi.co.uk

Pharmacy

Community, hospital and industrial pharmacists.

Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain
www.rpsgb.org.uk

Photography

Association of Photographers
www.the-aop.org
British Institute of Professional Photography

www.bipp.com

Physiotherapy

Physiotherapists use exercises and movement, electrotherapy, manipulation and massage to treat the injured, disabled, sick and convalescents of all ages for a large variety of conditions.

Chartered Society of Physiotherapy
www.csp.org.uk

Police

For police careers in all constabularies:
www.policecouldyou.co.uk

British Transport Police
www.btp.police.uk

Forensic Science Service
www.forensic.gov.uk

Psychology

Clinical psychology, educational psychology, occupational psychology, criminal and legal psychology.

British Psychological Society
www.bps.org.uk

Public relations

Public relations is part of the advertising and marketing mix, but is specifically about protecting and promoting reputation.

Institute of Public Relations
www.ipr.org.uk
Public Relations Consultants Association
www.prca.org.uk

Publishing

Publishing houses are normally split into three main areas: editorial; design and production; marketing

Publishers' Association
www.publishers.org.uk

Radiography

Diagnostic radiographers use X-rays, ultrasound and magnetic resonance imaging to produce images of the body. Therapeutic radiographers are involved in the cancer treatment team.

Society of Radiographers
www.sor.org

Retail management

Store managers, buyers, merchandisers. Look at websites for large retail outlets such as John Lewis.

British Institute of Retailing
www.bir.co.uk

Science

Biochemical Society
www.biochemistry.org
Royal Society of Chemistry
www.rsc.org
Institute of Biology
www.iob.org
Institute of Mathematics and its Applications
www.ima.org.uk
Institute of Materials
www.materials.org.uk
Institute of Biomedical Science
www.ibms.org
Institute of Physics
www.iop.org
Geological Society
www.geolsoc.org.uk

Social work

Field social work, education welfare officers, probation officers and residential care work.

General Social Care Council
www.gsccl.org.uk

www.socialworkcareers.co.uk

Speech and language therapists

Speech and language therapists assess and treat all kinds of voice, speech and language defects.

Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists

www.rcslt

Sport

Professional players, teaching, coaching, instruction and sports administration.

Sport England

www.sportengland.org

The Central Council of Physical Recreation

www.ccpr.org.uk

Surveying

The measurement, management, development, and valuation, of everything, whether it is natural or man-made. The main areas of surveying are: general

practice surveying (valuation, estate agency, auctioneers and property development); quantity surveyors (building accountants); building surveyors.

Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors

www.rics.org.uk

The Chartered Surveyors Training Trust

www.cstt.org.uk

Teaching

Primary or secondary?

Teacher Training Agency

www.canteach.gov.uk

Television, film and radio

For general information: SKILLSET

www.skillset.org

Also look at:

www.ft2.org.uk

www.bbc.co.uk/jobs

Travel agent/tour operator

Travel Training Company

www.ttctrain

ing.co.uk

12. Art and drama courses

You need to speak to the Visual & Performing Arts Teams well in advance of making your choices. Application deadlines can vary from college to college.

- UCAS conservatoire – **Separate application from UCAS**
- UAL Deadlines will be Jan.
- Students will be able to choose one foundation via UAL.
- Notification of interview dates through track if made via UCAS.
- You may also apply to Ravensbourne and Kingston if you want to stay in London.

12.1 Why do an Art foundation course?

Many students at Norwood School study Art or fashion in the Sixth Form and think about doing an Art foundation course. But before you commit yourself to this route you need to think about your reasons for doing it.

Many sixth-form students will be doing Art A level or Level 3 BTEC which is the study of painting, drawing and sculpture. Yet most students in this field at university will study design subjects, such as graphic, fashion, product or interior design. An art foundation course acts as a bridge between A-levels and design degrees.

The normal attributes of an Art foundation course

- It is one year long, full-time.
- Fees are not normally charged if you take the course while you are still eighteen years old.
- Most courses will make you work hard on your drawing skills.
- In the first term, you try out all the major types of design – graphic, fashion, product, interior and other types, depending on the course.
- In the second term you will try to decide the area of Art and Design that you would like to specialize in. You will begin to concentrate on this area so that you have a specialist portfolio for the degree course you want to apply for.
- It is very common for students to start an Art foundation course believing they want to do a certain sort of design, such as fashion, and then, once they have tried everything out, to decide to do something different, such as illustration.
- It is a very intense year and it is not an easy option. You should know by the end of it whether Art and Design is for you. If you feel that you do not want to do a degree in Art and Design then you can apply for other courses on the strength of the A levels that you have.
- Most Art and Design degrees make the successful completion of an Art foundation course an entrance requirement.
- You do not apply for art foundation courses through UCAS. You either apply through the University of the Arts Admissions Scheme or direct to the colleges. When you visit the colleges (see section 12.3), you will be given details on how to apply.

A common question that many students ask when applying for Art foundation courses is: "Should I do UCAS Apply as well?"

For most people – those who definitely know that they want to do an art or design degree – the answer will be “no”. This is because it makes things too complicated when you want to apply for degree courses later on.

If, however, you know that you definitely want to do a degree which is *different* from art and design, then you can apply through UCAS for deferred entry and do the foundation course as a gap year.

12.2 Structure of the Art Foundation course

The three stages of the 1 year fulltime course comprise of a:

1. Exploratory stage

This stage consists of an accelerated programme of diagnostic visual study.

Units

- Unit 1 Information and Research
- Unit 2 Recording and Responding
- Unit 3 Media Experimentation

Content

- Drawing Studies
- Two-dimensional Studies
- Three-dimensional Studies
- Historical and Theoretical Studies
- Information Technology Studies
- Photography Studies

2. Pathway stage

This stage consists of a more testing and interpretative programme of integrated diagnostic studies leading towards the identification of, and involvement in, selected areas of specialist work.

Units

- Unit 4 Information and interpretation
- Unit 5 Combined experimental studies
- Unit 6 Media development
- Unit 7 Preparation and progression

Content

- A project sequence of open-ended, interpretative, enquiry-based investigations becoming progressively more area specific.
- Historical and Theoretical Studies
- Gathering of Information on Subject Areas and HE Provision
- Production and Preparation of an HE Application Portfolio

3. Confirmatory stage

This stage consists of a period of sustained study leading to the presentation of a substantial body of work in a broad area of specialisation.

Units

- Unit 8 Integrating Theory and Practice
- Unit 9 Personal Confirmatory Study

Content

- Self-initiated projects developed, agreed and formalised in tutorial as a major project.
- Historical and Theoretical Studies
- Gathering of Information on Subject Areas

12.3 Art foundation course visits

University of the Arts London UAL

This University has 5 colleges, you can only apply to one Foundation at one college.

Camberwell College of Arts

Visits take place between October and December. Go to the main building on the Peckham Road site:

Camberwell College of Arts
Peckham Road
SE5 8UF.

For more details contact:

020 7514 6416
www.camberwell.arts.ac.uk.

Central St Martins College of Art and Design

Open days will run from the October half-term until the end of term in December. *You cannot just turn up – you must book a place!* To book a place you will need to phone the college's information office on:

020 7514 7022/3.

Chelsea College of Art and Design

Contact 020 7514 7941 from the end of October to find out exact time and venue details. Visit the website:

www.chelsea.arts.ac.uk.

For students specifically interested in fashion and textiles design and manufacture, the

London College of Fashion runs a fashion design orientated foundation course. For details contact:

020 7514 7712
www.fashion.arts.ac.uk.

For students specifically interested in graphics, the **London College of Communication** runs a foundation course, which specializes in this field. For details contact:

020 7514 6650
www.lcc.arts.ac.uk.

Other colleges for Foundation courses include:

- Ravensbourne Art College www.ravensbourne.ac.uk
- Kingston Art College <http://fada.kingston.ac.uk>
-

What you need to know

- You do not need your portfolio for these initial visits.
- For courses at the University of the Arts,
- For All Art foundations in country <http://www.ucas.com/ucc/foundation/index.html>

12.4 Drama training

Prior to deciding which Performing Arts Degree you would like to study, you need to speak to the Performing Arts Faculty staff. They may be able to help guide you to specific courses or colleges that they know would suit you as an individual.

Students wishing to pursue a stage career should note that funding can be an issue. You **may be required to pay for auditions.**

- Most courses accredited by the National Council for Dramatic Training or NCDT (these are the ones that lead you into professional acting, dance or stage management) are state funded through the HEFC and you will be treated the same as any other higher-education student. Be aware, though, that colleges may decide to charge the higher fees asked for by other universities.
- Some courses, however, are not state funded, so you need to check with each individual college.
- If your college is not funded by HEFC arrangements, you may be entitled to a Dance and Drama Award, or DADA.
- If you get a DADA you will be treated like any other student when it comes to fees and student loans.
- The college that has accepted you decides who will receive a DADA, and competition will be fierce.
- Colleges can also award their own scholarships – though you cannot rely on getting one of these.
- Many drama schools are joining up with larger universities and will therefore come under HEFC arrangements. It is important that you contact the schools you are interested in to see what their funding situation is.
- Only NCDT-accredited courses can guarantee you membership of Equity (the acting trade union), which most people need to get acting work.

Look for essential information from :

Conference of Drama Schools

www.drama.ac.uk (you can download an abridged version of the official guide);

or: Council for Dance Education and Training

www.cdet.org.uk.