



St Laurence School Sixth Form  
'Care - Inspire – Succeed'

# **St Laurence School Sixth Form**

## **YOUR Future Guide**

### ***“YOUR Guide to YOUR Future”***

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**Check your email EVERYDAY for live updates on everything  
from University to Careers**

## Introduction

Choosing what you do when you leave school is likely to be a life changing decision. It could define what you do for a career. That's why you need to think very carefully, get as much information as possible, and make the best decision for you.

University entrance will be the route for most. However it is not the only path to employment.

The choice of university course should be for the right reasons. A high proportion of undergraduates do not complete the course, often because their selection was not well thought through. Time spent now could make all the difference.

There are a vast range of courses taught at universities and likewise a vast range of careers. There will be courses and careers that you didn't even know existed. It's worth making the effort to consider courses other than just your favourite A level.

There are careers that do not require a specific type of degree course, whereas some degree courses clearly lead to a specific vocation. You may also need to think about whether there will be a demand for your possible career in the future. It's far more complicated than A level choices!

This booklet is for you to think now about what you may do in the future.

### What are your thoughts so far?

Question	Yes / No / Not sure	What do I need to do next?
After sixth form do you intend to go to university, take a college course, take a gap year, start an apprenticeship or go straight into employment?  (Please make clear your current preference)		
Have you sent for any college and university prospectuses?		
Have you found out when there are university and college open days that you may be interested in?		
Have you considered where you want to study:  a) Type of campus b) Distance from home c) Whether to live at university or home		
Are you considering continuing a subject you are studying at A level or something new?		
Are you aware of the ratings of universities? e.g. newspaper league tables		

Question	Yes / No / Not sure	What do I need to do next?
Do you have any university or college courses in mind?		
Are you aware of the UCAS tariff points system for courses?		
Have you considered the employment prospects for graduates of universities and courses you are considering?		
Have you considered the teaching quality grading of your Universities?		
Have you considered the student satisfaction percentages and reports for your University?		
Have you visited the town / city and or been to an Open Day? Make sure you like the place you will be studying in – 3 years is a long time!		
Have you seen a careers advisor?		
Have you used any careers websites?		
Do you have a chosen career in mind?		

## **Why go to university?**

### **Study something you love**

While you are at school you will study many different subjects, some of you will enjoy more than others. You need to research what you intend to do at university because you will be studying your choice for three years or more. You are more likely to be successful if you enjoy what you are learning about. And of course the qualification you receive could lead to your dream job.

### **Employers will often prefer a university graduate to a school leaver**

Graduates traditionally earn more than those who have not gone through higher education and therefore have a greater choice of jobs to apply for.

### **It is not just your academic skills that employers look for**

By going to university you will gain more independence and confidence. At university you won't have teachers chasing you for work, making sure you have done your homework or that you are turning up to class. You will be treated as an adult and you must be independent and disciplined enough to do things on your own. It is this determination, self-discipline and confidence that will make you stand out from everyone else – and hopefully land you that amazing job.

### **University is not just about work**

The social side of being a student is a very important part of the experience. You will meet people from all around the world. Many universities have a high proportion of international students, so learning about other cultures could be part of everyday life for you. If you speak to anyone who has been to university, you will find that most will have made some of their best friends while being a student.

Some courses offer the opportunity to spend time abroad as part of your study (such as under the Erasmus Programme).

Your time at university will be hard work but it will also be fun and full of life changing experiences.

## Useful Websites

**UCAS:** [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) - The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service is the admission service for students applying to British universities and HE colleges. The website includes videos and guidance for students searching for courses and the entrance criteria including the UCAS tariff system (points). It is also the centralised portal for university applications.

**WhatUni.com:** [www.whatuni.com](http://www.whatuni.com) - University search engine. Search using courses you want to study or grades you are going to get.

**Unistats:** [www.unistats.direct.gov.uk](http://www.unistats.direct.gov.uk) - This is the official website to help you make an informed choice when deciding which UK university or college to apply to. It includes the results of the latest National Student Survey. Use Unistats to compare and review universities and subjects in order to help you choose the best UK university and subject for you.

**Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF):** [www.timeshighereducation.com/news/teaching-excellence-framework-tef-results-2017](http://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/teaching-excellence-framework-tef-results-2017) - more than 130 UK universities and other higher education institutions being awarded gold, silver or bronze ratings for the quality of their teaching. See how your University ranks.....

**Career / Uni Course / Apprenticeship Information:** [www.SACU-student.com](http://www.SACU-student.com) - An excellent site that has information about every course, career, apprenticeship that is available.

**Next Step:** [www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk](http://www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk) - This government website with advice on careers and vocational courses. The website includes essential information for around 750 types of job and further links to employment prospects by industry sector.

**The Complete University Guide:** [www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk](http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk) - Independent guide to UK universities including league tables.

**The Independent, The Times and The Guardian Newspapers** - Newspaper University guides – includes subject tables and league tables.

**OpenDays:** [www.opendays.com](http://www.opendays.com) - Website listing University Open Days.

**Apprenticeships:** [www.careermap.co.uk](http://www.careermap.co.uk) - Search the latest Apprenticeship and Traineeship vacancies.

**University Scholarship / grants:** [www.thescholarshiphub.org.uk](http://www.thescholarshiphub.org.uk) - Search for UK scholarships, grants or bursaries for university.

## Location, location, location

Where you go to university or college is a big decision.

### **The University league tables**

With around 140 universities in the UK, there are many to choose from. Universities have different entry requirements depending on their popularity, research, staff and history.

There are a number of different league tables for universities such as published in The Guardian, The Daily Telegraph and The Complete University Guide (see useful links).

The universities themselves have groupings that you should be aware of. The Russell Group is a collaboration of twenty four UK universities (including Oxford and Cambridge) that together receive two-thirds of research grant and contract funding in the UK. As such they are generally considered the leading group. <http://www.russellgroup.ac.uk/>

<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>1. University of Birmingham</b></li><li><b>2. University of Bristol</b></li><li><b>3. University of Cambridge</b></li><li><b>4. Cardiff University</b></li><li><b>5. Durham University</b></li><li><b>6. University of Edinburgh</b></li><li><b>7. University of Exeter</b></li><li><b>8. University of Glasgow</b></li><li><b>9. Imperial College London</b></li><li><b>10. King's College London</b></li><li><b>11. University of Leeds</b></li><li><b>12. University of Liverpool</b></li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>13. London School of Economics &amp; Political Science</b></li><li><b>14. University of Manchester</b></li><li><b>15. Newcastle University</b></li><li><b>16. University of Nottingham</b></li><li><b>17. University of Oxford</b></li><li><b>18. Queen Mary, University of London</b></li><li><b>19. Queen's University Belfast</b></li><li><b>20. University of Sheffield</b></li><li><b>21. University of Southampton</b></li><li><b>22. University College London</b></li><li><b>23. University of Warwick</b></li><li><b>24. University of York</b></li></ol>
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The university league tables and groupings do not tell the full story of the reputation of particular subjects within a university. When you have a course in mind it's worth revisiting information on individual universities and the course they offer to see their reputation, such as through unistats.

### **Tuition fees**

You may also be considering the level of tuition fees. These will now vary between universities, generally being between £7,000 and £9,000 (the maximum) per year.

### **Free Money!!**

It is also worth investigating whether a University will give you money for grades achieved or for other reasons such as choosing them as your first choice, equally if you have dyslexia or a learning need what support do the University offer – free resources e.g. IT and printing.

## **Type of campus**

As well as academic considerations your choice will be influenced by whether you want to live in a big city or a provincial town, whether in a city centre or parkland campus. The social side may be important, or the sporting facilities.

## **Accommodation**

How far away would you be happy with? Or does the thought of student debt make you think about living at home?

Living away from home for the first time results in more choices:

- Will you want university accommodation in the first year?
- Halls of residence or university flat?
- Catering or self-catering?

## **Alternatives to university**

### **Apprenticeships and employment**

Apprenticeships provide an opportunity to earn money and gain experience of the world of work.

You will receive training of between one and four years that leads towards nationally recognised qualifications.

Anyone over the age of 16 and not continuing in full time education can apply. Entry requirements can vary, depending on the Apprenticeship and industry sector.

More details of apprenticeships can be accessed through the dedicated page of Resource Comp@nion online [www.resourcecompanion.co.uk](http://www.resourcecompanion.co.uk) or [www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk)

### **Further education courses**

These are offered by colleges and are generally vocational i.e. training with a specific trade or profession in mind. Qualifications are typically BTEC and City & Guilds. Courses can be either one or two year's full time duration.

Entry is by direct application to the college. The nearest colleges to Bradford on Avon is Wiltshire College with campuses at Trowbridge, Chippenham, Lackham and Salisbury –see [www.wiltshire.ac.uk](http://www.wiltshire.ac.uk) and City of Bath College [www.citybathcoll.ac.uk](http://www.citybathcoll.ac.uk)

Students may apply to other FE colleges although you will need to consider where to live if they are not within reasonable travelling distance of home.

One course should be highlighted being Foundation in Art. This is a one year course with the aim of progressing to various university courses for a wide range of graphical and art based subjects. The Trowbridge campus of Wiltsire College has high reputation with 96% of students moving onto university.

### **Direct entry to work**

Some employers, particularly larger ones, have direct access after A levels with supported training. More details of particular employers can be found on Resource Comp@nion online [www.resourcecompanion.co.uk](http://www.resourcecompanion.co.uk) or [www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk)

### **It's all about the money, money, money**

While the most important aspect of deciding on a career is recognising what works for you in terms of strengths, skills, knowledge and personality, it doesn't hurt to have some idea of what pays well.

Generally, the better qualified you are, the better your earnings potential. The best paid careers mostly start with a first degree and then further qualification. Some of the highest paying careers include:

<b>Medical and health related:</b>	<b>Legal related:</b>	<b>Other:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anaesthetists</li> <li>• Obstetricians and gynaecologists</li> <li>• Oral surgeons</li> <li>• Orthodontists</li> <li>• Psychiatrists</li> <li>• Surgeons</li> <li>• Family doctors (GPs)</li> <li>• Paediatricians</li> <li>• Dentists</li> <li>• Veterinary surgeons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lawyers</li> <li>• Judges</li> <li>• Barristers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investment bankers</li> <li>• Chief Executives</li> <li>• Airline pilots and flight engineers</li> <li>• Air traffic controllers</li> <li>• Engineering managers</li> <li>• Systems analysts</li> </ul>

Average full time earnings in the UK are £26,200 per year (median earnings before tax, employees, for the year to April 2011), with 10% earning more than £52,600 and 10%

earning less than £14,100. When researching careers, think about whether the likely earnings will meet your expectations.

Remember, earnings are dependent on the demand for the work and the number of people who can and want to do the work (supply and demand – ask a business and economics student).

### **Employment trends**

#### **Who are the biggest employers of new graduates?**

Graduate openings that currently offer most jobs are:

- 
- Accountants and auditors
  - Investment banking
  - Armed Forces
  - Public sector
  - Banking and finance
  - Solicitor practices
  - Applications software engineers.
  - Computer systems analysts
  - School teachers (with a PGCE if following a subject specific degree).
  - Systems engineers.
  - Systems analysts.
  - Network administrators.
  - Employment and recruitment specialists
- 

Further details aimed at current undergraduates is available at [www.highfliers.co.uk](http://www.highfliers.co.uk)

#### **What are likely to be the careers expanding in numbers in the next few years?**

One of the fastest growing areas of employment in recent years relates to computer technology. Technological advance and the continued integration of IT and digital communications into the workplace throughout the private, public and voluntary sectors ensure that this trend will continue for some time. Systems analysts, designers and developers, computer programmers, web developers, consultants and information managers reflect the range of these career areas. Hardware engineers are also needed, working in infrastructure construction and repair, fibre, cable, satellites, etc.

Healthcare related jobs are likely to increase in number in line with the growing age of the population – people are living longer so there are more people in the older age groups – and also the expansion of treatments available for medical conditions, whether delivered in the primary healthcare sector or within hospitals.

Other careers deemed to be ‘hot’ future prospects relate to areas of scientific advance, and in particular the “bio” sciences, such as biotechnology. Tissue engineers and gene programmers have been highlighted, but all skill levels are included – as companies grow, so

does their administration infrastructure. Other new scientific areas include nanotechnology and energy technology.

### **The top professions**

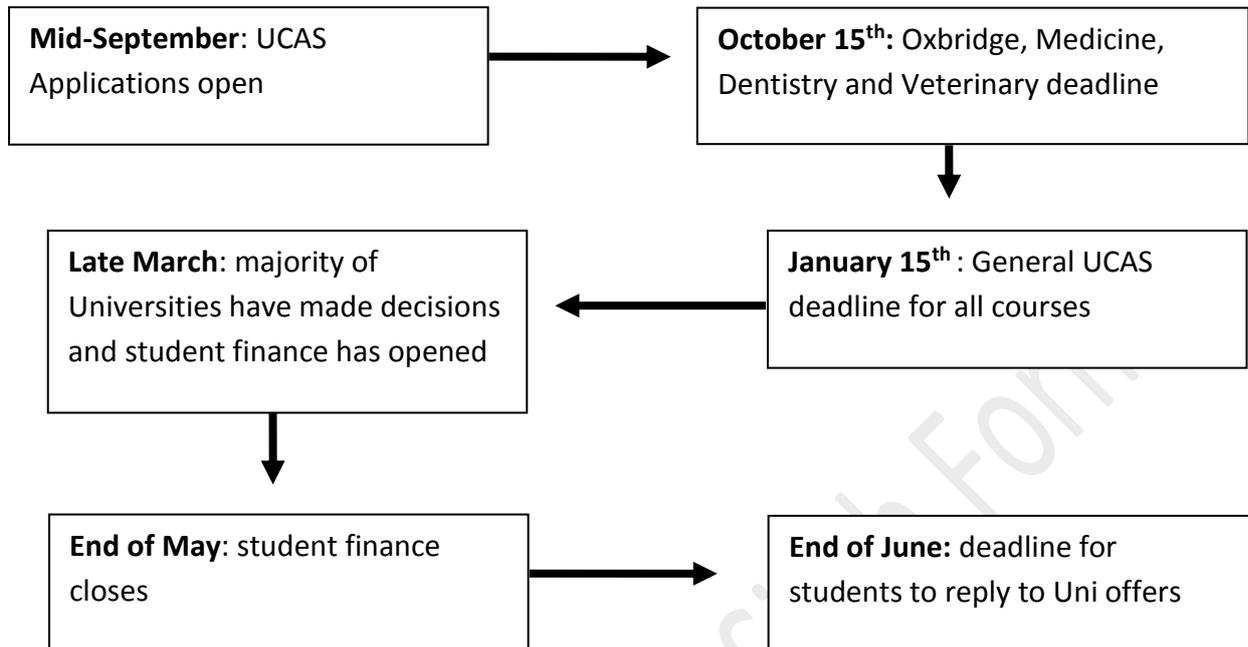
The top professions normally include admission into a professional body such as the Royal College of Surgeons or the Law Society (for solicitors), whilst for some, matters are further complicated by registration with regulatory bodies.

Many of the professional bodies are 'Chartered' having been granted by parliament, or are 'Learned societies'.

Look at their websites for the qualifications and experience they require. Listed below are a few of the largest:

- British Medical Association (BMA): **Doctors** [www.bma.org.uk](http://www.bma.org.uk)
- The Law Society: **Solicitors** [www.lawsociety.org.uk](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk)
- The Bar Council: **Barristers** [www.barcouncil.org.uk](http://www.barcouncil.org.uk)
- Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW): **Chartered Accountants** [www.icaew.com](http://www.icaew.com)
- British Dental Association (BDA): **Dentists** [www.bda.org](http://www.bda.org)
- Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS): **Vets** [www.rcvs.org.uk](http://www.rcvs.org.uk)
- IFS School of Finance: **Bankers** [www.ifslearning.ac.uk](http://www.ifslearning.ac.uk)
- Chartered Insurance Institute (CII): **Insurance Professionals** [www.cii.co.uk](http://www.cii.co.uk)
- Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA): **Architects** [www.architecture.com](http://www.architecture.com)
- Institute of Civil Engineers (ICE): **Civil Engineers** [www.ice.org.uk](http://www.ice.org.uk)

### University Application Timeline



### UCAS Point Tariff – new from August 2017

Grade	Point Equivalent
A*	56
A	48
B	40
C	32
D	24
E	16

## Writing your Personal Statement

### **2 excellent websites:**

- [www.which.co.uk/personal-statement-do](http://www.which.co.uk/personal-statement-do)
- [www.which.co.uk/personal-statement-don't](http://www.which.co.uk/personal-statement-don't)

### Do' and Do not's with your Personal Statement

<b>Do</b>	<b>Don't</b>
Do mind map your ideas before starting	Try to be too fancy and use language that doesn't make sense.
Check University websites for your course information and ensure that you meet the key requirements	Try to be funny – it will put admissions tutors off!
Do create several drafts and keep going back and reflecting on what you have written, ask your teachers, tutor, Mrs Chatfield, myself to read them	Don't lie or you risk being caught out at interview when asked to explain something in detail and you can't!
Write with integrity and show your desire and hunger for the course. Whilst doing this ensure you use your best English, grammar and punctuation etc.	Copy someone else's work <b>this is plagiarism</b> and UCAS use software to detect this. If this happens your statement will not be accepted.
Be enthusiastic throughout – you need to sell yourself and make yourself stand out, this is your chance to show off and show your passion for the course you are applying for	Rely on a spellchecker. Proof read your work and ask parents, teachers friends to do so.
Use approximately 66% of the statement on the course and your appropriateness for it and 33% on extracurricular and work experience etc.	Leave it until the last minute..... this will result in a rushed and panicked application that will not do you justice.

## **Writing the Personal Statement** **4,000 characters INCLUDING spaces**

The first thing you must remember is that your personal statement will probably be the only opportunity you get to “talk” directly to the admissions tutor on the programme you want to study. It is therefore vitally important that you make this statement as effective as possible! If you do apply to a programme which invites candidates to interview, your personal statement may also form the basis of your interview.

Your personal statement is an opportunity for you to demonstrate why you think you would be a good student for the programme you are applying to and why the University should select your application over those of other candidates. It is primarily an academic statement and you must target it very directly towards the subject in which you are interested, though a University will also want to know something about your more general interests.

**It is recommended that you cover three main areas in your personal statement in the following order:**

1. Why do you want to study this subject?
2. What have you done in the past that makes you particularly suitable to study the subject?
3. What else have you done that would contribute to the course and the university community and makes you an interesting and unique individual?

### **1. Why this subject?**

This could be a short sentence and needs to capture the reason why you are interested in studying on the programme you are applying for. Some of the most effective personal statements start simply, for example, “I want to study History because...”. With this opening statement you are trying to communicate to the admissions tutor your enthusiasm for the programme. You might want to think about these questions and areas:

- Your knowledge of the subject area
- What does the programme entail?
- Why does it interest you?
- What interests you the most?
- Include articles / literature read etc?
- Avoid a ‘corny’ start e.g. *‘I have loved Geography since a young age because I like the outdoors.....’*
- Where could studying the programme lead?

## **2. Why You?**

Once you have outlined your reasons for being interested in the programme you are applying to, you need to demonstrate why you would be a good student. In this section you are trying to convey your inclination and ability to study on the programme. You need to be able to show the admissions tutor that you have the right background in terms of academic ability and the right interest or inclination, that is, that you know what the programme you want to study involves. For example, if you want to be a primary school teacher but have never worked with children of that age the admissions tutor will wonder what your inclination to study to be a teacher is! When writing this section you'll need to think about and quote evidence from:

- Your academic studies
- Any voluntary work
- Your hobbies and interests
- Things you have learned from books, newspapers, TV programmes and so on
- Experiences in your year out (if you are having one)
- Any relevant work experience (e.g. medicine, physiotherapy)
- Particular project work in your studies

## **3. Are you interesting and unique?**

Finally, you should write about what makes you an interesting and unique person; all those extra things you have done or experienced which will bring something extra to the community of the University you want to join. It doesn't matter what you've done, you need to reflect on the skills and lessons you have learned and write about that. You may want to cover:

- What do you enjoy doing outside of school
- Your hobbies, leisure activities
- Sports you participate in
- Other sorts of extra-curricular activities
- Significant responsibilities you hold, at home or in clubs or societies
- Special achievements
- What you have learned if you have had a job

Remember to mention these parts of your life, and if appropriate the skills that will help you with the course.

Make sure you get members of staff to check your personal statement. The best staff are ones you trust and ones with experience of your subject area i.e. the ones that teach the subject!

**An A – Z of personal qualities and attributes you may have.....  
Use them in your UCAS Personal Statements or in CV's**

Tick	Quality/attribute/trait	Tick	Quality/attribute/trait	Tick	Quality/attribute/trait
	accurate		fair		productive
	adaptable		flexible		quick learner
	adventurous		friendly		rational
	ambitious		generous		reliable
	analytical		good humour		resourceful
	approachable		hard working		realistic
	articulate		helpful		resilient
	assertive		honest		respectful
	attention to detail		imaginative		responsible
	collaborative		inclusive		risk taker
	calm under pressure		independent		self aware
	cheerful		industrious		self motivated
	compassionate		influential		self reliant
	competitive		innovative		sincere
	congenial		intuitive		spontaneous
	conscientious		inquisitive		tactful
	considerate		level headed		take initiative
	consistent		loyal		team worker
	cooperative		mature		tenacious
	creative		methodical		thoughtful
	curious		observant		thorough
	decisive		open minded		tolerant
	dedicated		optimistic		trustworthy
	dependable		organised		versatile
	determined		outgoing		visionary
	diplomatic		passionate		
	disciplined		patient		<b>Can you think of more? Add them below</b> e.g. - common sense
	discreet		perceptive		
	driven		persistent		
	dynamic		personable		
	eager		persuasive		
	efficient		pleasant		
	empathetic		poised		
	energetic		polite		
	enthusiastic		practical		
	entrepreneurial		precise		
	ethical		punctual		