



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

Next Steps 2022

University Application (UCAS)

Apprenticeships

Degree Apprenticeships

Employment

St Laurence School Sixth Form

“YOUR Guide to YOUR Future”

Contents

Page 2: Introduction to the guide and your next steps

Pages 3 & 4: ‘What are your thoughts so far?’

Page 5: Why go to University?

Page 6: Useful Websites

Page 7: ‘Location, Location, Location’: Useful Information

Page 8: Alternatives to University

Pages 9 & 10: ‘Money, Money, Money’

Page 11: The Top Professions

Page 12: The University Application Timeline

Page 12: UCAS points to grade equivalent

Page 13: Writing your Personal Statement Do’s and Do Not’s

Pages 14 & 15: Writing the Statement: structure and format

Page 16: list of personal qualities you may include in your personal statement

**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 many. However, it is not the only path to employment and there are an increasing amount of routeways for you to consider including: Apprenticeships, Degree Apprenticeships, Educational Courses and Employment as we have shared in Core.

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? |
|---|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <p>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?</p> <p>(Please make clear your current preference)</p> | | |
| <p>Have you sent for any college and university prospectuses?</p> | | |
| <p>Have you found out when there are university and college open days that you may be interested in?</p> | | |
| <p>Have you considered where you want to study:</p> <p>a) Type of campus b) Distance from home c) Whether to live at university or home</p> | | |
| <p>Are you considering continuing a subject you are studying at A level or something new?</p> | | |
| <p>Are you aware of the ratings of universities? e.g. newspaper league tables</p> | | |

| 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 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 may prefer a University graduate to a school leaver:

As shared in Core it is a fact that Graduates 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. Some courses also offer the opportunity to spend time abroad as part of your study (such as under the Erasmus Programme).

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.

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 - 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 - University search engine. Search using courses you want to study or grades you are going to get.

Unistats: Unistats - Data and Information - 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): Teaching Excellence & Student Outcomes Framework - 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 - An excellent site that has information about every course, career, apprenticeship that is available.

Next Step: National Careers Service - 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 - 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 - Website listing University Open Days many of which have already begun with a range of Virtual tours available.

Apprenticeships: National & Local Apprenticeships- Search the latest Apprenticeship and Traineeship vacancies.

University Scholarship / grants: 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 considered by some as leading institutions. <http://www.russellgroup.ac.uk/>

| | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. University of Birmingham2. University of Bristol3. University of Cambridge4. Cardiff University5. Durham University6. University of Edinburgh7. University of Exeter8. University of Glasgow9. Imperial College London10. King's College London11. University of Leeds12. University of Liverpool | <ol style="list-style-type: none">13. London School of Economics & Political Science14. University of Manchester15. Newcastle University16. University of Nottingham17. University of Oxford18. Queen Mary, University of London19. Queen's University Belfast20. University of Sheffield21. University of Southampton22. University College London23. University of Warwick24. University of York |
|---|---|

However, 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 vary between universities, they can be up to a maximum £9,250 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 these dedicated sites:

[Guide to Apprenticeships](#) & [Find an Apprenticeship](#)

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 college to Bradford on Avon is Wiltshire College with campuses at Trowbridge, Chippenham, Lackham and Salisbury –see www.wiltshire.ac.uk and City of Bath College 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.

Trowbridge Art Foundation: One course worth highlighting is the 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 Wiltshire College** has a good national 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 Career Companion online [Career Companion](#) or 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:

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

Average full-time earnings in the UK are £26,200 per year (median earnings before tax, employees, for the year to April), 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

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.

Sought after professions

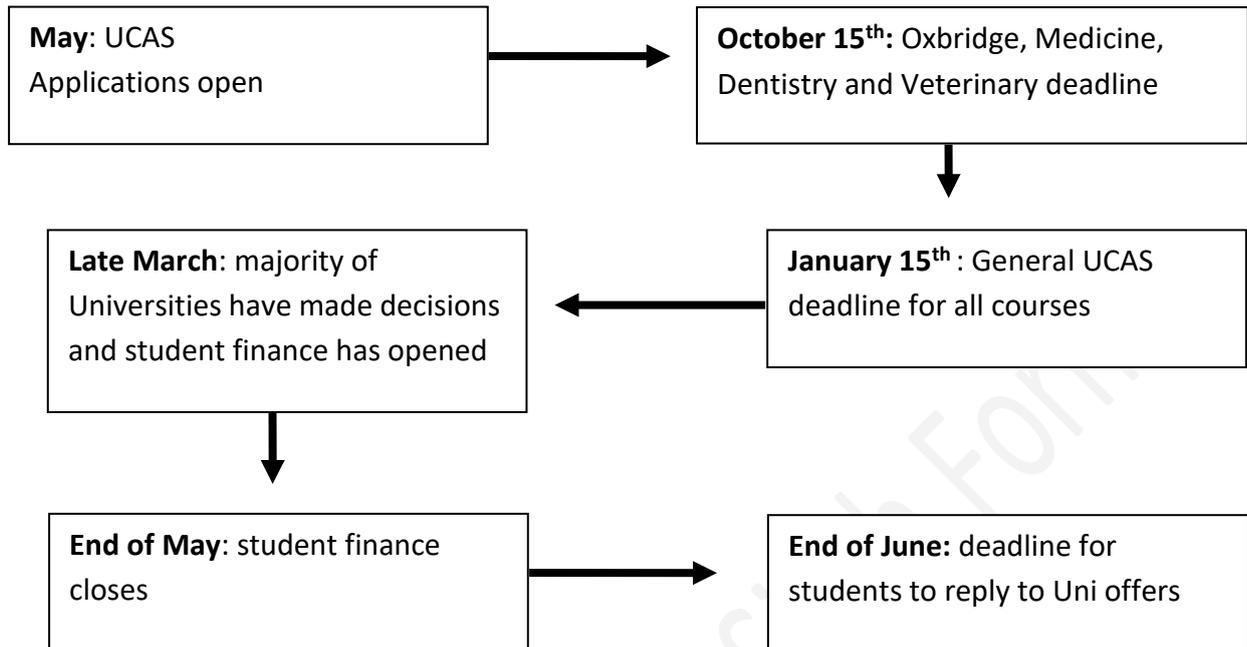
These professions normally include admission into a professional body such as the Royal College of Surgeons or the Law Society (for solicitors), whilst for some, matters are further complicated by registration with regulatory bodies.

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

University Application Timeline



UCAS Point Tariff

| 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
- www.which.co.uk/personal-statement-don't

Do' and Do not's with your Personal Statement

| Do | Don't |
|---|---|
| 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 this is plagiarism 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. |

Start your Draft now!:

It is really important that you begin to draft this statement now. Don't be put off by not being sure how to begin.

You may not know exactly which course you want to study but you probably have an idea of the area: Science, Humanities, Care, Education, Medical etc – so begin to write it as soon as you can.

Personally, I would have a 1 hour window where you try and complete an entire draft (remember it is only 4000 characters, so about 1 side of A4) – then you have something to work with which you can keep amending and revisiting.

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 – Make specific links to key areas of study in your A levels
- 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 | | Can you think of more? Add them below e.g. - common sense |
| | discreet | | perceptive | | |
| | driven | | persistent | | |
| | dynamic | | personable | | |
| | eager | | persuasive | | |
| | efficient | | pleasant | | |
| | empathetic | | poised | | |
| | energetic | | polite | | |
| | enthusiastic | | practical | | |
| | entrepreneurial | | precise | | |
| | ethical | | punctual | | |