



YEAR 12 UCAS GUIDE 2020-21



Introduction

You are now embarking on a new, exciting chapter in your life!

Although you are starting this journey in the unusual circumstance of working from home, the processes we will take you through will be the same as every other year and we will be able to offer you just as much advice and support as usual.

Whether you decide to go to a UK university, or an international one, whether you choose to take a gap year or go straight to university, whether you apply for an art foundation course or want to go on to do an apprenticeship or straight into the work place, this booklet will help you in your research and then in the application process itself.

- What should you look for in a course?
- What should you look for in a university?
- Should you take a Gap Year?
- What is a personal statement?
- Who can help you?
- How can you prepare for any interview you may be offered?
- What should you be doing now?

If you use this booklet wisely, personalise it and annotate it, the questions above will be answered over the course of the next few months.

Note the timeline on page 3 which tells you what you should have done and by when.

Good luck. We know that these can be tough decisions for you - remember that we are all here to help you.

The Sixth Form Team

June 2020

UCAS Applications 2021 Timeline

June	Students to register with UCAS. This does not commit you to an application but just gets you started on the process.
Monday 22nd June	DEADLINE - Return your completed personal evaluation form to your tutor.
16 th June – 1 st September	Students to work on first draft of personal statements. Those who definitely don't want to make a UCAS application can work on application letters to apprenticeship schemes or employment.

Autumn Term 2020

1 st October 2020	Deadline for Music Conservatoires
15 th October 2020	Deadline for Oxbridge, Vets and Medics UCAS applications and applications for admissions tests (We recommend that students complete their applications by the end of September)
Half term	Oxbridge work to be sent
4 th November – there may be some adaptations this year due to Covid. We will update you as soon as we know.	Admissions tests e.g. BMAT, ELAT, HAT https://www.admissionstesting.org/for-test-takers/ See https://www.admissionstesting.org/for-test-takers/bmat/bmat-november/dates-and-costs/ for BMAT (dates and updates due to Covid) https://www.admissionstesting.org/for-test-takers/elat/about-elat/ ELAT https://www.admissionstesting.org/for-test-takers/mat/about-mat/ MAT tests https://www.admissionstesting.org/for-test-takers/hat/about-hat/ HAT
October - November Tutorials	Interview preparation
15 th January 2021	UCAS deadline of application (except those with 15th Oct deadline) (Please note that students are highly encouraged to submit their applications well before the deadline. As a guideline, we recommend getting the application sent off by the end of November)

Starting the process – What do I need to do now?

Academic preparation

Many of you already have the advantage of strong GCSE results, but more critical than these will be your predicted A Level grades. In addition, to maximise your chances of success you need to actively seek opportunities to broaden your horizons beyond the curriculum and to engage in activities which are potentially relevant to your degree choice. The School will offer suggestions and guidance but ultimately it is a question of personal motivation and self-directed learning.

Do not however feel that it is all about academic preparation at this stage and that nothing else matters. It has always been the aim of the Sixth Form to provide you with an all-round development, and while university admissions tutors may not place a particularly high value on them, the long term benefits and life skills will be important after university. There are also plenty of ways in which activities undertaken alongside academic study will directly enhance an application. Universities will be aware that your opportunities have been limited by school closure this year. However, you can show them how you have taken advantage of this time ie attending some of the online courses, events and work experiences that Julie has been emailing to you.

What should I study?

This is the most important part of your research. There are plenty of fantastic universities but you need to find the **course** that is right for you.

It is important to keep an open mind about this and do as much research as you can. There are many very exciting courses available and different universities specialise in different modules. Take the opportunity to look at new subjects and to consider joint honours programmes. Remember that most single honours programmes will enable you to spend some time in your 1st and 2nd year studying other subjects.

Try to avoid specialist courses unless you are pursuing a career in Medicine, Architecture, Engineering or Dentistry and Veterinary Science. Employers are more concerned with where you have studied and the quality of your degree than they are with what you have studied.

A good starting point is UCAS www.ucas.com Also check career specific requirements at www.prospects.ac.uk. Or <https://discoveruni.gov.uk/> <https://www.theuniguide.co.uk/> is very useful – use the ‘Find a course’ link in the top white banner to search a degree course or put in your A level subjects for suggested degree routes.

Where should I study?

Finding out about universities has never been easier. You can use a range of sources from:

- Course search on the UCAS Website (www.ucas.com)

- <https://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/league-tables/rankings>
- University websites and prospectuses (online and in Study Centre)
- Heap University Offers Guide
- Unistats (www.unistats.com)
- Visits to University open days (www.opendays.com)
- Taster sessions with Headstart courses (<https://www.etrust.org.uk/headstart-courses>)
- Times and Guardian Good University Guides

(<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/good-university-guide-2019-best-universities-by-subject-qghg55ckm>)

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/good-university-guide-in-full-tp6dzs7wn> Will cost you £1 a month for 3 months' subscription but be sure to cancel subscription in time so you don't end up paying more

(<https://www.theguardian.com/education/universityguide>)

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/ng-interactive/2019/jun/07/university-league-tables-2020>

University Open Days

This year, of course with Covid, many universities are planning Virtual Open Days for this term. Hopefully there will be opportunities for actual visits later in the year. Many universities are also offering to link you up with a current student who you can ask questions of. UCAS have got a buddy scheme that you can take advantage of <https://wwwucas.com/chat-to-students>

Check regularly at www.opendays.com for updates. Some faculties and colleges within universities also run subject specific open days which you may find to be the most useful.

Oxford University: Virtual Open Days on 1st & 2nd July. Open Day currently planned for 18th September.

Cambridge University: Virtual Open Days on 2nd & 3rd July.

Other virtual Open Days can be found at: <https://wwwucas.com/ucas/events/find/scheme/virtual-and-digital?keywords>

Information on Open days for potential medics can be found at

https://www.themedicportal.com/application-guide/medical-school-virtual-open-days/?utm_source=Social&utm_medium=Twitter&utm_campaign=virtualopenday

These virtual open days will be a great chance to get thinking about the differences between unis and to narrow down your choices. When you do get to visit, make sure you are fully prepared and know what questions to ask to make the most of your visit. By the end of an open day you should aim to make sure that you know as much as possible about the content of the course.

Here is a checklist of possible questions:

The Degree Course

- Is the syllabus interesting? Look at all years of the course.
- Is the course directly relevant to particular career fields?
- Are my examination subjects acceptable for entry to the course?
- What grades are usually required?
- Is the course modular or non-modular?
- Are all candidates interviewed before being offered a place?

- How flexible is the course structure?
- What is the average intake of students taken on to the course?
- How many students are there in the Department?
- What is the proportion of men to women?
- What is the proportion of mature students?
- Will I be at a disadvantage if I apply for deferred entry?
- Is a gap year accepted or discouraged?
- Will I be able to study part of the course in another country?
- How is the course taught?
- Will I be encouraged to develop transferable skills?
- Will I be able to practise modern language skills during my course?
- Will I have access to the ICT facilities that I need?
- How have past students rated the course on unistats?

General Impressions

- Do I like the geographical situation and local facilities?
- Do I like the look of the campus?
- Are all first year students guaranteed accommodation?
- What is the accommodation like – and the shared facilities?
- Is there suitable accommodation nearby if I live off campus? What does it cost?
- What other student welfare services are available?
- If I keep a car or bike what is parking / security like?
- Can students be assured of their personal safety on campus?
- If inter-site movement is involved how is it organised and financed?
- What are the travel costs between home and university? University and campus?
- What facilities area available for students with a disability?

Other Activities

- What clubs and societies are available?
- Are my sporting, social and cultural interests well catered for?
- Is there a student newspaper?
- How active is the Students' Union?
- How do most graduates from this course start their career?
- How easily do they find their first employment?
- What help can I expect from the Careers Advisory Service? Is there input on employability?
- Is there a students' job bureau? What is the availability of part-time work?
- Which employers regularly recruit from this institution?

Gap Years

Are admissions tutors opposed to the idea of taking a Gap Year?

- A worthwhile Gap Year, for example gaining employment experience, a new skill and or contributing to the wider community is valued by nearly all admissions tutors but it is best to check with individual departments if this is not made clear on their website.
- You will be expected to make some reference as to how you intend to spend your gap year in your personal statement and to show how it will enhance your suitability for a particular course, but it is not necessary to provide detailed information and admissions tutors understand that plans can change.
- Deferred application has the advantage that you have already secured a university place before undertaking a gap year programme. They do need however careful consideration and it is often better to make a direct application and then request a deferred place once your gap year plans are finalised. Post A-level applications are recommended for those who are not sure what they wish to study or whose academic profile at the end of the Year 12 is not strong enough for their preferred university or courses.
- Make sure your Gap Year is well planned. The websites below offer some of the most popular gap year programmes:-
 - <https://yearoutgroup.org> Link to 25+ providers with information and links to the websites of providers
 - www.gapyear.com Fine site giving advice
 - <https://lattitude.org.uk>
 - <https://etrust.org.uk/the-year-in-industry> Year in Industry - Engineering, science, IT, e-commerce, business, marketing, finance and logistics.
 - www.pwc.com/uk/ Sample business life post A level
 - www.kpmgcareers.co.uk Post A level placements
 - www.childint.co.uk (schemes involving work with children e.g. as an au pair)

Paid internships

- Deloitte; <https://www2.deloitte.com/cn/en/careers/internship.html>
- IBM; <http://www-05.ibm.com/employment/uk/?lnk=fpl-jobs-uk-en>
- KPMG, 8 Salisbury Square, London EC4Y 8BP;
<https://home.kpmg/pl/en/home/careers/students-and-graduates/kpmg-internships.html>
- Marks & Spencer Recruitment, 47-67 Baker Street, London W1A 4DN;
<https://careers.marksandspencer.com/early-careers/internships>
- The Year In Industry, Simon Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL <https://etrust.org.uk/the-year-in-industry>
- PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP Southwark Towers, 32 London Bridge Street, London SE1 9SY <https://www.pwc.com/my/en/careers/internships.html>
- UK Student Summer Internships; www.e4s.co.uk/docs/internships.htm

The Application Process

This term, you should start thinking about what you want to study. It is also important that you make a start on your UCAS application, and particularly your personal statement. The first term of Year 13 will be devoted to completing and submitting your applications and preparing for entrance procedures, including exams and interviews.

All applications will be completed online using UCAS Apply. You can select up to five choices (four for Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Sciences). You do not have to put your choices in rank order and Unis don't get to see where else you have applied.

Making your UCAS application

- A maximum of five choices is available. The majority of students pick the same subject at five different unis. If you do decide to choose different courses you need to keep your personal statement more general as the same statement will go to all of your choices.
- With over 50,000 courses in the UCAS system, and each with a unique code, it is very important that you double-check that you are applying for the correct course.
- Each university can view the application at the same time; choices are not listed in preference order.
- Universities cannot see where else you have applied. They will only see any other choices after you have replied to your offers.
- Consider the distance between the chosen university and your family home.

The UCAS process

To complete your UCAS form you need to complete this to do list after watching the video on the Next Steps area of the sixth form website:

1. Complete the registration section.
2. Complete your personal details with an email address you will be using over the next 18 months. Do not use your school email as you will lose that after your leave.
3. Use the buzzword 14218stmartins2021 to link your application to the school.
4. Complete your five university choices.
5. Fill in your education history.
6. Complete the employment section.
7. Upload your personal statement.
8. Agree to the 'declaration'.
9. Check through each of stages 1 – 9 with Mrs Howells.
10. Press 'Pay and Send' after the meeting with Mrs Howells. Use a debit/credit card to pay the £25 fee.
11. Mrs Howells will then upload your Reference.
12. The UCAS form will then be checked by Mrs Howells.
13. Once approved Mrs Howells will send the form to UCAS.

The Personal Statement

What is the personal statement for?

(from HE Advisor Certificate Course Manual by Andy Gardner)

1. To help universities decide who will be made offers

For some universities and courses, the personal statement will be used as the deciding factor after other things such as GCSE, school reference and A Level predictions have been taken into account. An excellent personal statement will not normally make up for an academic profile that is below what the course normally looks for.

2. To help them decide which candidates to interview

This can vary! An admissions tutor may use the statement to decide which applicants are borderline, and then call them in. A medical school might want to see a mention of medical work experience or voluntary work, and if it is not there, they may instantly be rejected.

3. To develop lines of questioning during interview

You need to be aware that everything you put into your personal statement can lead to further questions in the interview (if you are interviewed). Watch out for:-

- Putting down books, articles, websites on your statement that you intend to read and do not manage to read by the time of the interview.
- Saying a lot about why you want to do the subject, but not offering enough evidence! Saying you are passionate about poetry is fine, but naming the poems and saying why you are passionate about a particular poem is what the student should be aiming for.
- Being very general e.g. *"I regularly read 'New Scientist'"*, this will only lead to a more specific question, *"What was the last article you read in 'New Scientist'?"*, it might have been better to put down the specific article, at least you could be better prepared.

4. To test whether the student understands the nature of the course they are applying for

It is very important that you are able to communicate this in your statement. How you do this is totally up to you. For example an applicant to dentistry could write about various research science issues but a mention of preserving and extracting teeth, designing and fitting dentures and improving irregular teeth is going to indicate to the admissions tutor that they understand what they are applying for.

Further advice

The personal statement can be up to 4,000 characters (47 lines of text) and it is an invaluable opportunity for students to influence admissions tutors in their favour. But how can you ensure that you will impress?

To help you get started with your personal statement here is a basic model – a five point plan – which you can follow to ensure they cover all the necessary topics:

- **Your choice of course**

You must explain your reasons for choosing a particular course at university, and the background to your interest in the subject. This is the section that Admissions Tutors are most interested in, so it usually forms at least the opening paragraph. Remember: *What do*

you want to study? *Why* do you want to study it? What *evidence* have you got that proves this? Mention relevant and interesting reading here.

- **Your relevant work experience**
This includes placements through school, part time jobs, and voluntary work. You need to explain *what you learnt* from your work experience, and make this relevant to the course you are applying for.
- **Your school/learning experiences**
You should include any particular interests you have in your current studies, as evidence that you *enjoy* aspects of study.
- **Your interests and experience outside school/place of learning**
What do you do outside of your studies – sporting, social or other activities?
- **A concluding statement** – why pick you?

Bearing the five point plan in mind, here are 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 they have read
- Politics/current affairs
- Environmental issues
- Music (playing/listening)
- Travel (done/planned)
- Career ideas

Bear in mind what admissions tutors want to see in a personal statement. They will be looking for:-

- An idea of why you want to do the course.
- Evidence of a well-rounded personality.
- A well written statement (correct grammar and punctuation, interesting and expressive vocabulary, avoidance of clichés, goof presentation).
- Details of relevant work experience (especially for vocational courses).
- Evidence of broad key skills.
- Examples that demonstrate a willingness to work hard and persevere.
- Anything distinctive about courses the student has taken.
- Positive explanations of unusual subject combinations.

They do not want to see repeated information (for example, the student's name, A Level subjects) which is evident from the other parts of the UCAS Apply.

Here is an example of the opening section of a personal statement, dealing with the student's choice of course. The student wants to study English. The statement must say:

- *What* the student wants to study.
- *Why* the student wants to study it.
- What *evidence* there is that they are genuinely interested in the subject.

What and why? "I enjoy the reading, analysis and criticism of poems, plays and novels. The analysis of a play such as George Bernard Shaw's *Arms and the Man*, for example, can cover so many topics – the historical context, war, emotions and our unwillingness to come to terms with them. Such detailed examination of literary texts is for me the most appealing aspect of studying English."

The evidence? "As part of my A Level course I have particularly enjoyed the poetry of Wilfred Owen and *Bleak House* by Charles Dickens. Away from set texts I read widely, especially enjoying Patrick Hamilton, Stella Gibbons and Ian McEwan. I have recently read *The Iliad* and have been amazed to notice its influence on other works of literature."

Further information:

<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/when-apply/writing-personal-statement>

Sample Statements

Economics

My fascination with **Economics** was triggered when I read Robert Heilbron's book "The Worldly Philosophers". This gave me an insight into the progression of economic thought from Adam Smith to Karl Marx. I am intrigued by how influential many of these philosophies have been. Smith's ideas on competitive markets and the division of labour are still the basis of the economic theory which I am studying at A Level, and Marx's vehement criticism of capitalism played a huge role in the development of communism. Economics has been described as "the dismal science", but I have found it fascinating to see how the subject impacts on the world at a global, national and local level. I am particularly interested in how economic theories are applicable to current economic crises such as the credit crunch, and in analysing the effect of current government economic policies.

Studying A-level Economics at this time has provided a perfect learning base as macroeconomic theory is constantly relevant to every day events. This has encouraged my interest in current affairs and as the global financial situation developed, a more specific interest in the role of markets and the position of governments.

The election this year demonstrated this link, and also highlighted the difficulties that can beset both of them. I enjoy exploring the different economic solutions the parties put forward. Wider reading of newspapers, the Economist and books such as the Mystery of Capital by Hernando De Soto, attending lectures at LSE, St Paul's and the British Library has meant I can see the practical impact of the theories I have been studying. I had the opportunity to develop this further when, as a member of my schools Target 2.0 quartet, our findings were presented as to the best course of action for the Monetary Policy Committee at the Bank of England.

Through economics and philosophy enrichment my interest in markets and government policy was directed to the nature of inequality and by what means it should be determined. I became fascinated by the utilitarian argument and its relation to the formation of policy and the duty those in charge have towards those they govern. Maths A-level, and Bronze and Silver Awards in Mathematics Challenges have allowed me to fine-tune my problem-solving and statistical skills. I also have a keen interest in Biology and Chemistry. These subjects have helped me to develop an analytic approach to solving problems. Outside my studies I have taken part in the Young Enterprise scheme, working with others to set up a new company. In my role as the operations director, I managed the finances to help our team make a profit. The project taught me the importance of teamwork and collectively making decisions, both of which allowed me to achieve my Bronze Duke of Edinburgh award. I feel that the interpersonal skills that I have acquired through these experiences will be invaluable, as I will constantly be putting them to use during my degree course, career and life. As well as taking an active role within the school, I enjoy contributing to the community through being a volunteer shop assistant at Cancer Research, reorganising the library at my old primary school on a weekly basis and participating in the Millennium Seed Bank Project for a seed conservation department at the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew.

Outside the classroom I enjoy sketching portraits and cooking in my free time. I am hoping to take a gap year so that I can learn a new language. I have never previously studied Spanish and I am hoping to work and earn enough to pay for travel to South America.

I am excited by the prospect of dedicating the next three years to studying a subject I am so passionate about. I look forward to working and living independently, meeting people from different walks of life and especially to starting my chosen course.

Languages

It has emerged that the number of students studying **foreign languages** is declining. I am alarmed by this because I believe acquiring a language is vital, especially in the light of globalisation and an ever increasing need for people worldwide to understand and communicate with each other. On a personal level I have a very strong interest in languages particularly French, and I hope to become fluent in at least one other language. I understand that learning a language entails more than just being able to speak it fluently, a culture is also absorbed, how it is shaped, its inner workings, its very essence. The prospect of doing exactly this during the year abroad really excites me and would prove an invaluable opportunity.

Two exchange visits with French families in Strasbourg and Biarritz fuelled my interest in French language and culture in its broadest sense, including art, food and wine. Since then, I have developed a taste for French film, music and literature. I enjoyed reading Camus's *L'Étranger*, Jean de la Fontaine's poems and Voltaire's *Candide*, and I am keen to further my studies in French Literature at university. I have also enjoyed films depicting France's social tensions in different eras, by directors ranging from Jean Renoir to Mathieu Kassovitz. *'La Haine'* illuminated the social divisions within French society and I began to appreciate the extremes found in French town planning models. I was particularly fascinated by the use of lyric and poetic devices in the film's soundtrack to highlight social and political conflict. While in France, I became passionately engaged with contemporary issues such as the ban on the burqa and the concept of *'laïcité'* which curbs personal freedoms of religious expression. The paradox of the burqa as both a symbol of oppression and liberation was fascinating to observe as was the resultant tension between the liberal desire to express cultural identity and France's multicultural concept of *'laïcité'* which was adopted to relieve people of religious dogma. This, coupled with first-hand experience of racial intolerance towards North African immigrants, echoed some of my family's discussions about the injustice of apartheid.

Studying Italian at GCSE gave me an introduction to the Italian language and culture. I was intrigued by both. For example, Italy's current political situation is unique as it is the only EU country whose press is rated as only partially free due to Berlusconi's influence. Since reading *'The Prince'*, I have identified several traits of Berlusconi's which cohere with Machiavelli's study of an ideal ruler. Machiavelli's account of Italy's fragmented past informed me of Italy's composition and relationship with its history which I have further explored in *'The Dark Heart of Italy'* by Tobias Jones. This also aided my responses to debates about the cohesion of the EU when I was part of my school's European Youth Parliament.

In English I have studied texts from various periods by using contextual knowledge to highlight specific themes and by identifying techniques used by writers to convey a specific mood.

My A Level History course is on the twentieth century. I feel that to understand a language it is necessary to also appreciate its culture. It was for this reason that I read Schiller's *'Geschichte des Dreissigjaehrigen Krieges'*. As well as enjoying learning about the long-term consequences of the religious turmoil I studied in my AS Religious Studies, I also found it interesting to see how different countries perceive the same event.

I enjoy working with younger students, and am a sixth form rep, as well as a mentor in French and German. I enjoy tennis and other sports and play regularly at club level. I believe that my ability to juggle my academic and extracurricular interests will stand me in good stead at university and I am very much looking forward to starting my chosen degree.

History and Politics

As a child of parents who were political refugees from East Africa, I have had first-hand experiences of the impact of **History and Politics** on modern day living. On a recent holiday to East Africa to trace my roots, I was intrigued by the legacy of anti-colonial conflicts in Kenya; for example. It is still a source of argument in Kenyan politics today, where the government has decided officially to celebrate the Mau Mau rebellion, despite some opposition.

The episode illustrates the role of ethnic and class tensions in a way that is echoed in other African countries and even in some communities in recent British politics, such as Burnley and Oldham.

My interest in the subjects has grown through these experiences and has led me to study them formally at A level and I now wish to continue my education in these subjects at University.

During my A Level studies I became captivated by the interaction between the two subjects, in particular examining the way that ideas and events stimulated one another in developments from 1789 to the present day. I am intrigued with the how the fundamental thoughts of individuals such as Karl Marx have been put into practice in the 20th century by different political leaders, such as Lenin and Mao. This interest has led me to read the Communist Manifesto, which has enabled me to gain a deeper insight into Marx's views of the capitalist state and his desire to overthrow it.

My fondness for both History and Politics stretches beyond the school environment, where I have been able to explore the subjects through different people and experiences. After the recent general election my father was elected as a councilor for the Three Rivers District.

This has provided me with first hand experiences in the challenges involved in getting individuals involved in political activity. It has also enabled me to attend a local surgery, where I was able to witness members of the electorate raising grievances. Additionally, I participated in numerous different work experiences, including shadowing Judge Andrew Bright QC at Luton Crown Court, for the past two summers where I learnt the importance of the judiciary in maintaining a democratic state. I had the opportunity of attending several interesting court cases and had the privilege of having lunch with several different judges. This required me to exchange my views and join in their debates. My other subjects have enhanced my History course and helped me develop transferable analytical skills. This was particularly true of my English literature course. I have always enjoyed reading, not only for the inherent pleasures of fiction but for literature's use as an historical source. Studying Joyce's 'Dubliners', which describes a Dublin paralysed by its socio-economic conditions was one such example. Politics is a major interest of mine and studying it has added greater detail to my previous knowledge. I am particularly interested by the relationship between politics and history as well as political history itself. I am especially drawn to the compelling history of political extremes in the 20th century Hobsbawm's 'The Age of Extremes' expressed ideas about the role of the state and argument against liberalism, while I was not entirely convinced, challenged the certainties which I previously held. I am an active member of my school community involved with many activities from house drama to the huge number of music events my school organises. Most rewarding has been volunteering at the 'Urban Scholars' programme, mentoring younger pupils from local state schools on Saturdays. I am very much looking forward to developing academic interests in greater depth.

Medicine

Medicine combines my enjoyment of science and logic with my love of working with people. I would welcome the opportunity to make a difference to people's lives and find that there is nothing more interesting to study than the workings of the human body. I am therefore keen to pursue a career in medicine. Contact with the profession has shown me how important the role of the doctor can be to the patient and family and whilst I understand that medicine demands commitment and hard work; from talking to doctors I have learned that it is also rewarding and worthwhile. Voluntary work each week at a hospice has given me an insight into the world of palliative care. I enjoy talking to patients and taking them out to the gardens or chapel. Working with the terminally ill has made me aware of how much caring for someone who is dying affects you as a person. One patient I spent time with was lucid and talkative one week, but had deteriorated rapidly by my next visit. Although I was aware that they were terminally ill, I still felt guilty that I hadn't been able to talk to her again, especially when told that she had been looking forward to my visit. It has helped me gain a more rounded view of medicine and to understand how personalised the approach to palliative care should be.

Over Christmas I volunteered at a homeless shelter. I enjoyed listening to the guests and have learnt a lot about talking to people from different backgrounds. I have also learnt how homelessness can limit access to healthcare whilst malnutrition and substance abuse can mean that they require help more than other social groups. It was interesting that seeing a doctor was the most common request of the guests and how great a difference the doctor could make. Work experience at a GP's surgery and on an oncology ward has shown me that medicine requires the ability to work in a team as many branches of care may be involved in each patient's case, requiring both cooperation and organisation. At the GPs I was able to gain a greater idea of their work and of the most prevalent conditions facing them. I believe that in the next few years due to the forthcoming scientific revolutions in the fields of genetic engineering and nanotechnology the face of medicine will change significantly and we will experience a historical turning point. Reading "Human Embryonic stem cells" and "The Proteus Effect" along with "Nanoedicine", participating in conferences and watching a number of documentaries from discovery channel and horizon programme have helped me to prepare to enter a new generation of doctors

I have taken 4 A-level subjects because I want to try and understand as much as I can about the science behind medicine and human behaviour. Biology gave me an introduction to some of the physiology and experimental methods and I have learnt some of the pharmacological side from studying Chemistry, Maths taught me to think logically while Psychology has helped me to comprehend communication difficulties which in one case I observed led to an incorrect diagnosis by the doctor I was observing at Chase Farm Hospital. I am aware of the exhausting nature of medicine. Motivating, inspiring and energizing the patient and all the staff whose care contributes to the patient's wellbeing are the essential parts of the doctors' approach. I appreciate that medicine is a long course and at times can be very stressful for instance all patients hope and indeed expect to be cured.

Relaxation of some kind can help people to cope. I particularly enjoy music and have been a keen member of various choirs and ensembles at school. I am preparing for my grade 8 in violin and also enjoy playing the piano. When not involved in practice, rehearsals and groups. I go regularly to a gym. I realise that medicine will require dedication and commitment and that caring for others can be exhausting emotionally as well as physically. However it would also be a privilege and I am looking forward to the challenge.

Personal Evaluation

UCAS personal evaluation form to be emailed to your tutor by Monday 22nd June 2020

Any information you provide below is for the benefit of your tutor who will be writing the school reference to support your UCAS application. It is important that you include as much relevant information as possible and that you update it regularly.

A Level subjects in order of preference	1	2	3	4
Which parts of each of your courses do you enjoy the most? Where are your strengths in each subject?				

Courses

Which courses do you think you will be applying for at uni?	
What have you done to develop your interest in this subject?	
Which universities are you thinking of?	

Responsibilities

What responsibilities have you held in the Sixth Form?	
What have you learnt from these?	

Extra-curricular activities / Community Enrichment

What activities have you taken part in this year outside of lessons?	
What have you learnt from these experiences?	

Work experience

What work experience have you completed? Please explain if this is particularly relevant to your chosen course. Mention also any specific plans you may have.	
What did you learn from this?	

Super-curricular (anything you have done to extend your subject knowledge beyond your courses. This doesn't have to just be reading; it includes trips and visits, watching documentaries and films etc. Anything that shows your enthusiasm for your subject area.)

Have you attended any lectures/conferences/summer schools/taster classes?	
What have you learnt from these?	

Use the box below to add anything additional e.g. prizes won, sporting or musical achievements, scholarships, relevant travel experiences, expeditions etc. D of E is a great example.

--

Applying to Oxbridge

Some of you may be considering applying to Oxbridge. Both Oxford and Cambridge are very prestigious universities and attract a very high number of applicants every year. If you are considering applying, you need to make sure that you understand what is peculiar about Oxbridge. This involves:

- The collegiate system
- The distinctive style of teaching
- The differences between the courses at the two universities

More importantly, you must be aware of the entry requirements and the profile of successful candidates. Competition is tough and that you will need to demonstrate not only a very solid academic record, but also tangible evidence of sustained reading in the subject beyond syllabus, a genuine passion for the subject, as well as performing well at interview. Colleges are looking for people who are able to think on their feet and creatively, who are receptive to new ideas, who are keen to engage in discussion and enjoy being challenged. If you are the sort of student who does not like voicing their views in lesson and would rather sit quietly at the back, Oxbridge may not be for you.

What makes a successful Oxbridge candidate?

Tutors take into consideration the following:

- GCSE
- A level predicted grades
- Admissions test results
- Written test at interview
- Interview

They normally have a minimum of 8 grade 8 plus at GCSE. Candidates not offering a similar academic profile may well not even be invited to interview.

Which college should I choose?

Don't become too obsessive about this! You may very well end up getting an offer from a college that you did not apply to. Virtually everybody ends up loving their college anyway.

Be strategic!

Think about location. Two colleges in particular (Girton, Cambridge and Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford) tend to attract lower than average numbers of applicants because they are not in the centre of the respective cities.

What about entry procedures?

The majority of colleges use additional tests, some require marked written work to be sent, usually by early November.

What else should I be considering?

- Research the academic interests of the tutors at the colleges. Most college websites make this relatively easy.
- Smaller colleges e.g. Peterhouse at Cambridge and Pembroke at Oxford often have relatively fewer applicants per place.
- Larger colleges e.g. Kings at Cambridge and St John's at Oxford may attract more applicants because they are better known.
- The two all-female colleges at Cambridge (Murray Edwards and Newnham) always attract far fewer applicants per place.
- The **ratio of numbers of applicants per place** for your particular course may be a more helpful indicator of the strength of competition rather than the total numbers, but the 'pooling' system - usually more extensively used at Cambridge - helps to distribute numbers of applicants to places. You may well end up with an offer from a college that you had not applied to.
- The choice of college at Oxford is less crucial than at Cambridge. Oxford operates a more centralised admissions procedure so that all candidates for a particular course will go through roughly the same process irrespective of college. At Cambridge, however, candidates for one course may experience quite different entrance procedures at different colleges so it is worth researching those before you make a final college choice for Cambridge.

What should I be doing now?

- Complete any preparation or written work asked of you.
- Read around your subject. Spend your spare time, especially in the holidays, reading relevant material. Your subject teachers will help you with this. Reading lists are easily available to download from the Oxbridge college websites.
- Use your spare time effectively e.g. by attending conferences, undertaking work experience, carrying out community service.

These are excellent webinars about applying to Oxbridge

<https://www.oxfordandcambridgeoutreach.co.uk/webinars/ocsc-online-making-a-competitive>

<https://www.oxfordandcambridgeoutreach.co.uk/webinars/ocsc-online-supporting-students->

Applying for a Foundation Course in Art and Design

The Foundation Diploma in Art and Design is a one year course designed to enable you to learn through discovery and exploration; this is primarily achieved through your engagement with projects, lectures and study visits. The course is essentially a transitional experience in Art, Design and Communication preparing you for either a place in higher education or employment.

The wide range of specialist options available on the Foundation Diploma reflects the progression opportunities available at Degree level. Via the specialist pathways you are able to develop your subject specific portfolio in preparation for degree course applications.

Instructions for EU Applicants

Applications are made direct to the College or University in which you are interested. Institutions will provide their own application form. Application forms for entry in September 2020 are available to download from course websites, usually in October 2019.

Fees

Art Foundation Courses are classified as further education and are **free** to applicants under 19 years old at 31 August prior to start of course. Students taking the course are not eligible for a student loan.

Foundation Choices

A list of all Foundation Courses is available on the UCAS website.

You can apply to only **one** Foundation Diploma in Art & Design course within the University of the Arts London Colleges so it is important to make sure you have researched the course you are applying to. Specific course information is given on the website for each college.

University of the Arts London includes the following Colleges:

- Chelsea College of Art & Design
- Camberwell College of Arts
- Wimbledon College of Art
- Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design
- Foundation studies in Fine Art - Byam Shaw
- Foundation studies in Art and Architecture- Byam Shaw
- London College of Communication
- London College of Fashion

You are allowed to apply to as many Foundation courses outside University of the Arts London as you like.

Interview/Portfolio Review

Each College or University has its own selection procedure. Generally, when your application is received by the College, and subject to you meeting the entry requirements, you may be invited to a portfolio review/interview on a set day (these are usually held in February and March).

Advice on what to include in your portfolio is available at Open Days. Portfolio support and guidance is given to you by your art teacher.

The Decision

Generally, two to three weeks after your portfolio review/interview, you will be informed of the decision by post. If you have been successful, an offer of a place will be made. If unsuccessful, you can request that your application be considered by a second Arts London College through a 'clearing' process. This means that your original application will be passed on to the clearing college directly and the selection process is repeated. Please be advised that the clearing process will only happen if there are places left at the other University of the Arts London Colleges.

Applying to an Art and Degree Course following a Foundation Course at the University of the Arts

The majority of students go on to study at degree level at a College within the University of the Arts, whilst others choose to study at colleges nationally or internationally. Your application for a Degree Course in your chosen specialist area is made through your Foundation College. They will advise you about the UCAS process and write your reference.

Structure of the Art Foundation course

The three stages of the one year full time course comprise of a:

<p>1. Exploratory stage This stage consists of an accelerated programme of diagnostic visual study.</p>	<p>Units <u>1</u> Information and research <u>2</u> Recording and responding <u>3</u> Media experimentation</p>	<p>Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drawing studies • Two dimensional studies • Three dimensional studies • Historical and theoretical studies • Information technology studies • Photography studies
<p>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.</p>	<p>Units <u>4</u> Information and interpretation <u>5</u> Combined experimental studies <u>6</u> Media development <u>7</u> Preparation and progression</p>	<p>Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
<p>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.</p>	<p>Units <u>8</u> Integrating theory and practice <u>9</u> Personal confirmatory study</p>	<p>Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-initiated projects developed, agreed and formalised in tutorial as a major project • Historical and theoretical studies • Gathering of information on subject areas

Applying for Apprenticeships

An Apprenticeship is a real job with training so you can earn while you learn and pick up recognised qualifications as you go. If you live in England, are over 16 and not in full time education you can apply. They take between one and four years to complete and cover 1,500 job roles in a wide range of industries, from things like engineering to financial advice, veterinary nursing to accountancy. The key benefits of doing an apprenticeship are:

- you earn a salary
- you get paid holidays
- you receive training
- you gain qualifications
- you learn job-specific skills

Types of apprenticeship that exist include:

- Arts, Media and Publishing
- Leisure, Travel and Tourism
- Construction, Planning and Environment
- Retail and Commercial Enterprise
- Plumbing

Here are some recommended websites for you to look at:

www.apprenticeships.org.uk

<http://www.brooklands.ac.uk/apprenticeships/>

<https://www.farn-ct.ac.uk/apprenticeships/>

Advice for Success: The Complete University Guide

1. Have you selected the right course?

- With over 37,000 courses on offer through the UCAS system, this isn't always easy. Make sure you've done thorough research.
- Have a look at what modules you'll be taking and where courses are likely to take you in the long-term. Even if you're not thinking that far ahead this will show you've engaged in the process, giving you something to refer to in your personal statement. Admissions tutors like to see that potential students are truly interested.
- Be realistic! Have you got the GCSE or equivalent grades for the universities and courses you've put down and are you going to be able to achieve the A-Levels they're asking for? Your likely grades on your IRs will be a helpful guide.

2. Have you considered who is reading your personal statement?

- Admissions tutors want to fill their places with good students – interested, sensible and independent individuals. Take a look at your UCAS application and make sure you've managed to convey these traits. This may be via extracurricular pursuits or, as mentioned before, showing that you've truly engaged in the application process.
- Remember that admissions tutors live and breathe their subjects. Does your personal statement reflect that level of passion? If not, try to make sure it does. If you haven't done anything practical that displays a level of interest in the subject you're applying, read up on the content of the degree and relate your interests to it.

3. Have you got the basics right?

- Write your statement in Word first of all. Check your spelling and grammar, then do it again, and once more. With so many applications to choose from, admissions tutors may well dismiss yours if it contains misspelt words and basic grammatical errors. They may feel it demonstrates that you won't be able to perform to university standard in academic work, and if nothing else it's just lazy.
- Get it proofread! It's always useful to get a second or even third opinion. This will help iron out any silly mistakes and loved ones will be able to tell whether you've described yourself correctly.

And finally

Try not to leave it till the last minute... focus on what still needs to be done and get your application off to UCAS as soon as you can. It will be a relief when it is done and you can focus on your subjects. Applications received after the 15 January deadline will still be processed by UCAS, but not given a priority. They can, if they wish, reject you on the grounds that they have already received enough applications. However, if you are applying for one of the less competitive courses, or are applying from outside the EU, you are likely to find that your application is treated just like those that arrived on time.

Additional Information

Will there be changes to the application process this year due to Covid?

At present the guidance is that with the exception of 'live' open days the process this year is exactly the same as every other year. Of course, this may change and as soon as we get any information we will update you. It is a shame that you don't have the regular face to face contact with the sixth form team that we are used to. However, you have your tutors, Mrs Howells, Miss Jackson and Mrs Page ready to help you at anytime via email or a Zoom call. Please make use of us and our expertise.

The course content is not clear – how can I find out more?

The best thing to do is to email the university department. You will be surprised at how helpful they will be. Don't be worried about asking a trivial question.

I am worried about funding given the recent developments. Should I be?

There have been substantial changes to the funding arrangements for university courses. Information is available on the following website <https://www.gov.uk/browse/education/student-finance>. It is important to remember that although fees have increased substantially for some universities, the evidence that a university degree contributes positively to earnings potential is substantial.

I am thinking of applying to American Universities. Is the procedure different?

Undergraduate degrees in the US are very flexible. Most applications to US universities are under the "Liberal Arts Philosophy" where it is possible to take classes from a variety of subjects during the first and second years before specialising in your major field. This means that certain courses which are on offer as undergraduate courses in the UK can only be studied at post graduate level in the US eg medicine. Sixth formers who already know what they want to study can complete a "double major," degrees in two academic fields, often completed within the normal four years of study. Students may also earn a minor qualification for completing three to five classes in one field. It is also possible to apply without having a subject or subjects specified at all. However all applications usually require the submission of SAT, or Standard Attainment Test scores. It is possible to prepare for this independently or to attend intensive courses at organisations such as Kaplan. The tests are held several times a year and sixth formers are recommended not to take them at the same time as their A level examinations. Many find that taking SAT exams early in Year 13 avoids a clash with A Level examinations and produces scores in time for the main US university deadline date of January 31st. Most sixth formers apply for UK universities at the same time as American universities so that they can have a choice.

A good source of information is the Fulbright Commission : www.fulbright.co.uk