



St Benedict's Catholic High School
SIXTH FORM

YOUR
FUTURE?

**A Reference Guide for Parents
and Year 12 Students
on Post-18 Options**

2016/17

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17.03.15

UCAS / St Benedict's Timetable

February 2016	Centigrade questionnaires completed
March 2016	Centigrade reports issued
18 March 2016	UCAS Higher Education Fair at Worcester University
21 April 2016	UCAS Higher Education Student and Parent Evening
May - July 2016	Preparation of Personal Statements
3 May 2016	Registration opens for UKCAT admissions tests (medicine and dentistry)
24 May 2016	UCAS Undergraduate Apply 2017 opens for applicants.
June – September 2016	Open days / Visits to universities
July 2016	Subject references prepared by teachers
1 July 2016	UKCAT testing begins (at Driving Test Centres across England)/CUKAS Application live
19 July 2016	Higher Education Day
September 2016	All other Personal Statements for proof reading
Sept – November 2016	School references added to UCAS applications and sent to UCAS
1 September 2016	BMAT Registration opens
12 September 2016	Early applicants' Personal Statements - final check (Medicine, Veterinary, Dentistry, Oxbridge, Music at Conservatoires)
21 September 2016	UKCAT registration closes
Oct 2016 – Feb 2017	Interviews by some universities for some courses
1 October 2016	CUKAS deadline (Music)/BMAT standard registration closes
5 October 2016	Last testing date for UKCAT
15 October 2016	Final deadline for BMAT registration
15 October 2016	UCAS deadline for Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary & Oxbridge
21 October 2016	Final deadline for all other Personal Statements
1 st Week in Nov 2016	Admission Tests if required (sat in school)
15 January 2017	Official deadline for UCAS applications
25 Feb 2017	UCAS Extra: Late applications may be considered by applicants who have not been successful with first round of applications. 'Extra' applications can only be submitted to UCAS one at a time per applicant
4 May 2017	Firm and insurance place selection deadline (if all decisions from universities received by 31 March 2017)
5 July 2017	Clearing opens
6 July 2017	IB results are published and places confirmed

Introduction

Year 12 students are now beginning to think about what they intend to do after completing their Sixth Form studies. Whilst some may be intending to seek employment immediately, the majority will be applying for university or other Higher Education courses. With so many pathways available, choosing a route may seem daunting, confusing and a little worrying for both parents and students. The aim of this booklet is to outline all of the options available, the processes involved and how to approach them, the relevant information needed and any key dates we are working to.

Additional information will be provided for the students within academic guidance sessions, university conferences, the **UCAS Higher Education Fair** in Worcester on **Thursday 17 March** and parent information evening on **Thursday 21 April at 7pm**.

Please read this booklet through very carefully and if you have any queries contact Mrs McLeod or Mrs Munford. It is very important that each student takes the time to prepare their applications carefully. The decisions they make now will affect where they study and live for the next 3-5 years and, subsequently, future employment.

University Visits and Open Days

Students should not consider spending a minimum of three years in a place they have not even visited. Most universities hold open days for Sixth Form students where they offer guided tours and an opportunity to meet staff and have a look at the facilities.

Students should choose the universities they intend to visit carefully as it is not practically possible to visit them all. They cannot afford to miss too many lessons either, so it is advisable to make as many visits as possible on Saturdays and during the holidays. Many universities will schedule their open days at these times, but if not visits can be arranged by contacting the university directly to ask if there is any possibility of being shown around a particular department. We will allow our students to take up to two days off school to attend open days if necessary but they must obtain permission from their form tutor well in advance.

In the light of increasing competition and differentiation influencing the selection of university applicants, we advise students to be realistic in the choice of their courses.

University Education versus Cost

Is it still worth going to university?

University graduates are more likely to:

- earn significantly more and have more choice over their career
- enjoy their jobs
- start their own businesses
- invent new products, develop new ideas
- follow their passion for their favourite subject
- be engaged citizens: volunteer, vote, protest, support their children's schools
- engage in community activities
- develop a wider circle of friends
- engage in further learning for work or pleasure
- be healthier, live longer, and cost the health service less

than non-graduates with an equivalent level of school educational achievement.

How will I pay for my degree?

- You do NOT have to find the money to pay for your tuition costs before or while you are studying. Tuition fee loans are available and are not dependent on household income
- Most universities are charging between £6,000 and £9,000 per year for tuition costs.
- Maintenance loans are also available for other costs such as living expenses. The amount you can have is dependent on whether you live at home or move away for university and the residual household income
- The two loans are added together in a single student loan so you only need to make one repayment – collected via the tax system
- Loans are provided by the Student Loans Company
- Almost all universities offer bursaries to students achieving very high grades and for students from low income households
- You pay 9% of your income when you earn over £21,000 (20% income tax plus 9% loan repayment = total 29% deduction)
- Your loan is written-off after 30 years

Further information about costs, repayments and other sources of income can be found in the enclosed leaflet.

Types of Higher Education (HE) courses for Undergraduates

Foundation Degrees

These are normally two years long and are work and career related. They can be studied at a university or at a local franchised FE College. An optional top up year will convert the qualification to an honours degree, and these courses are gradually replacing Higher National Diplomas. They are often marketed at non-traditional HE applicants, such as adults.

For more information: www.gov.uk/browse/education
www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started

Bachelors and Masters Degrees

These can have various titles, such as:

- Bachelor of Arts (BA)
- Bachelor of Science (BSc)
- Master of Arts (MA)
- Master of Science (MSc)
- Bachelor of Engineering (BEng)
- Master of Engineering (MEng)
- Bachelor of Law (LLB)
- Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery (MBBS)
- Bachelor of Education (BEd)

Single or Combined Degrees

The following are possible:

- Single (ie. BSc in Geology)
- Equal combination (ie. BSc in Mathematics **and** Management Studies)
- Major minor combination (ie. BSc in Mathematics **with** Management Studies)
- Triple combination (ie. BA in Philosophy, Psychology and Physiology)
- Cross disciplinary and interdisciplinary (the student takes a wide range of courses across a range of disciplines, ie. BA in Economic and Social Studies)

Sandwich Degrees

These are normally four years long and can include a single (thick) twelve month work placement or two (thin) six month work placements. Generally tuition fees have to be paid whilst on placement but are often at a reduced rate. The placement is normally paid work and placements are usually found for the student, although sometimes students have to find them themselves.

Extended Degrees

- These offer an initial preliminary year at college and are common in Engineering and Science
- The first year is often referred to as a foundation year or year zero and should not be confused with Foundation Degrees
- There are a few Art and Design courses, which are offered as an alternative to Art Foundation courses
- Preliminary years for Medicine offer an alternative route, but they still require evidence of high academic achievement at Level 3 (IB Level/A Level)

HE Providers: the major groupings

A very useful way to understand the UK university/HE sector is to look at the groups and associations that they have formed themselves into. Here we look at who they are and what they say about themselves.

All the information is taken from their own website unless in italics.

Association of Colleges www.aoc.co.uk

The Association of Colleges was established in 1996 as a voice for further education and higher education delivered in colleges at national and regional level. Membership includes general and tertiary FE colleges, Sixth Form Colleges, and specialist colleges in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. There are 356 colleges that are members.

GuildHE www.guildhe.ac.uk

GuildHE is a recognised representative organisation within the HE sector. Founded in 1967 as the Standing Conference of Principals, it became GuildHE in 2006. *Many of these institutions were Teacher Training Colleges, Art Colleges and Agricultural Colleges.*

Abertay University	Regent's University London
Arts University College Bournemouth	Rose Bruford College
Bishop Grosseteste University	Royal Agricultural College
Buckinghamshire New University	Royal Central School of Speech & Drama
Falmouth University	St Mary's University Belfast
Harper Adams University	St Mary's University College Twickenham
Leeds College of Art	University of Chichester
Leeds Trinity University	University for the Creative Arts
Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts	University of St Mark and St John
Newman University College	University of Winchester
Norwich University College of the Arts	University of Worcester
Plymouth College of Art	Writtle College
Ravensbourne	York St John University

Associate Members

Anglo-European College of Chiropractic	Milton Keynes College
Bradford College	SAE Institute
The British School of Osteopathy UCFB	
Cleveland College of Art and Design	
GSM London	
The Institute of Contemporary Music Performance	

United Kingdom Arts and Design Institutions Association (UKADIA)

www.ukadia.ac.uk

The members are specialist creative industries, arts and design institutions from across the UK's higher and further education sectors. UKADIA's aim is to promote nationally and internationally the distinctive character of UK specialist arts institutions providing higher education courses, and to add value to their effectiveness through recognising and advancing their links to the creative, cultural and communications industries, the community and business. The specialist colleges provide a key contribution to the UK's world-renowned reputation in the visual arts and creative industries.

Arts University College Bournemouth	Ravensbourne
Cleveland College of Art and Design	Rose Bruford College

Falmouth University
Hereford College of Arts
Leeds College of Art
Norwich University College of the Arts
Plymouth College of Art

Royal Central School of Speech & Drama
Royal College of Art
University for the Creative Arts
University of the Arts London

Million+ www.millionplus.ac.uk

This is a university think tank. This means we work to help solve complex problems in higher education and to ensure that policy reflects the potential of the UK's world class university system.

Member institutions pride themselves on diversity, flexibility and opportunity: each has its own specialities, qualities and principles, but together they provide a network of institutions that truly promote aspiration, excellence and innovation:

University of Abertay Dundee	Leeds Trinity University
Anglia Ruskin University	London Metropolitan University
Bath Spa University	London South Bank University (LSBU)
University of Bedfordshire	Middlesex University
The University of Bolton	Southampton Solent University
Canterbury Christ Church University	Staffordshire University
University of Cumbria	University of Sunderland
University of East London (UEL)	University of West London
Edinburgh Napier University	University of the West of Scotland
University of the Highlands and Islands	

The Russell Group www.russellgroup.ac.uk

The Russell Group is an association of leading UK research intensive universities committed to maintaining the highest standards of research, education and knowledge transfer. The members of The Russell Group have the quality and strengths to compete successfully in the global market place for research, skills, expertise and training. The aims and objectives of The Russell Group are to promote the interests of universities in which teaching and learning are undertaken within a culture of research excellence, and to identify and disseminate new thinking and ideas about the organisation and management of such institutions

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

University Alliance www.unialliance.ac.uk/

The University Alliance is a group of twenty three major business focused universities. The particular strengths and focus of the Alliance universities are their strong economic relevance and close partnerships with business. Alliance universities are delivering world leading research with impact, providing real time business solutions through shared expertise and equipping graduates to be future leaders and entrepreneurs. Alliance universities work with 27% of all UK students and achieve some of the highest graduate employment levels.

Cardiff Metropolitan University	Nottingham Trent University
Coventry University	Open University
University of Greenwich	Oxford Brookes University
University of Hertfordshire	Plymouth University
University of Huddersfield	University of Portsmouth
Kingston University	University of Salford
University of Lincoln	Sheffield Hallam University
Liverpool John Moores University	University of South Wales
Manchester Metropolitan University	Teeside University
	University of the West of England

Conservatoires

UK conservatoire education is recognised as providing world class specialist professional training. Music is common to all conservatoires, drama to three of them and dance is now offered at two. In order to provide a smooth transition into working life, UK conservatoires maintain relevant professional and industry links. Emphasis is placed on practical training within the context of validated degree courses at university level: three or four-year undergraduate courses (BA or BMus) and one- or two-year postgraduate courses (MMus, MA, PgDip etc)

Guildhall School of Music and Drama
 Birmingham Conservatoire
 Conservatoire for Dance and Drama
 Leeds College of Music
 Royal Academy of Music
 Royal College of Music
 Royal Northern College of Music
 Royal Conservatoire of Scotland
 Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama
 Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance

Admission Tests

Universities are beginning to develop admissions tests for the more competitive; for many you need to have taken the test before your application will be considered. The main tests currently used are:

Common Format Written Assessments for entry to Cambridge

Common Format Written Assessments for entry to Oxford

BioMedical Admissions Test (BMAT)

For entry to medicine, veterinary medicine and biomedical science courses.

Classics Admissions Tests (CATS)

For entry to any course including Classics at the University of Oxford.

English Literature Admissions Test (ELAT)

For entry to English courses at the University of Oxford.

Graduate Medical School Admissions Test (GAMSAT)

For graduate entry into medicine and dentistry courses.

History Aptitude Test (HAT)

For entry to all degrees involving history at the University of Oxford.

Health Professions Admissions Test (HPAT)

For entry to certain medical courses at the University of Ulster.

The National Admissions Test for Law (LNAT)

For entry to law.

Mathematics Aptitude Test (MAT)

For entry to mathematics or computer science, or a joint honours degree involving mathematics at the University of Oxford.

Modern and Medieval Languages Test (MML)

For entry to modern and medieval languages at the University of Cambridge.

Modern Languages and Linguistics Aptitude Tests (MLLAT)

For entry to any course including a modern language at the University of Oxford.

Physics Aptitude Test (PAT)

For entry to physics, or a joint degree involving physics at the University of Oxford.

Sixth Term Examination Papers (STEP)

For entry to mathematics at the University of Cambridge and University of Warwick.

Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA Cambridge)

For entry to computer science, natural sciences, engineering, economics, land economy and politics, psychology and sociology (PPS) at a number of University of Cambridge colleges.

Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA Oxford)

For entry to philosophy, politics and economics (PPE), economics and management (E&M), experimental psychology (EP) or psychology and philosophy at the University of Oxford.

Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA) UCL

For entry to European social and political studies at University College London (UCL).

UK Clinical Aptitude Test (UKCAT)

For entry to medical and dental schools.

Professional Skills Tests (Literacy and Numeracy)

For entry to Initial Teacher Training

Numeracy and Literacy Tests (set by the university or college)

For entry to Nursing and Midwifery

Other admissions tests may be required which are not listed. Please check the Entry Profiles for your chosen course(s) on UCAS [Course Search](#), contact your chosen universities and colleges or check their websites.

If students need to take any entrance tests it is very important that they research this in advance and make arrangements with Mrs McCaslin, the Sixth Form administrator. Students will be responsible for entering themselves for UKCAT, which is an online test. Most other entrance exams will be run through school but we do need to enter all students in advance; if the deadline to apply to sit these exams is missed - students will have to wait another twelve months before they can re-apply.

It is essential to keep up-to-date with information regarding entrance exams as changes are constantly being made. Current and up-to-date advice is available on the UCAS website (<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/choosing-course>). Although we will oversee all applications, it is ultimately the student's responsibility to make the necessary arrangements for the relevant tests and to know what each university requires.

Alternatives to University

The vast majority of our students intend to apply to university either in Great Britain or abroad. There are some students who will decide to defer entry and take a gap year or a year in industry. Other students may decide to join the Armed Forces, take a Foundation Course or simply decide that they want to start employment and apply for a higher or advanced apprenticeship, a sponsored degree or part-time degree so they can 'earn' while they continue to learn.

It is our responsibility to ensure that every student is made aware of all the possible progression routes available to them, so they can make informed choices and take the route that is right for them.

A Gap Year

A gap year is a period of 'time out' before going to university or entering employment. It is a time to broaden your horizons and develop life experiences to enhance your degree or career.

You could:

- Volunteer in the UK or abroad
- Take part in an expedition
- Work for a year
- Have paid work abroad
- Combine travel with work
- Travel independently and see the world
- Au-pairing

There are pros and cons with taking a gap year. Check with admission tutors as they may recommend something specific or may not like deferred entry. If you decide to take a gap year you can apply at the normal time, indicating deferred entry and secure a place for the following year.

Work experience or voluntary work undertaken during a gap year will enhance a student's life skills, levels of confidence, independence and financial capabilities, especially if living away from home. Students will acquire transferable skills useful for future courses and careers. Wherever possible, work experience relevant to a deferred degree course would be useful. Using part of a gap year for travel abroad will broaden the mind, promote independence and decision making and overall personal development.

For more information refer to hand-outs and list of useful websites.

Year in Industry (YINI) www.yini.org.uk

The YINI, an EDT (Engineering Development Trust) programme is the largest work placement provider in the UK, enabling students to take part in a structured, challenging and high quality paid work placement across the fields of engineering, science, IT, business and technology in some of the world's largest organisations.

In the ever-increasingly competitive job market, employers want more: a degree is no longer enough! Young people who have gained knowledge of their chosen industry have transferable skills and experience within the industry – they are, therefore, more attractive to employers as well as being ahead of the rest at university and in the graduate market.

Year in Industry also provides students with:

- A good salary (approximately £10,000 - £16,000 p.a.)
- The chance of getting sponsorship through university
- Future prospects with their host company
- Support from application to fulfilment of placement
- Industrial mentor
- The chance to combine a placement with travel abroad

For more information see Mrs McLeod and refer to hand-outs.

Studying Abroad

Some of our students will decide to study abroad either on a full time degree course, as part of a sandwich year at university or on an exchange through the Erasmus scheme or something similar.

The students will all have a talk on the pros and cons of studying abroad followed by a workshop for those who are seriously considering this as an option.

For more information see hand-outs and refer to the Sixth Form folder on the Student Shared Area at school.

Higher, Advanced and Degree Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships take between one and five years to complete and cover 1,500 job roles in a wide range of industries, from engineering to accountancy, public relations to veterinary nursing. Apprenticeships are now available up to degree level and beyond.

Data published by the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS) – March 2016:

- Up to 28,000 apprenticeship vacancies are available online at any one time.
- Apprenticeships are available in 1500 job roles, covering more than 170 industries, from advertising to youth work and from environmental engineering to legal.
- More than 1300 employers are involved in designing the new apprenticeships standards. In 2015 there were 500,000 new apprenticeships (20,000 of these were higher or degree apprenticeships)
- 19% of advanced apprentices progress to higher education.
- After finishing, the majority of apprentices (90%) will stay in employment (including 2% self-employed).
- Government target to create 3 million apprenticeships by 2020 having provided an additional £10m to fund higher education qualifications within higher and degree apprenticeships.

Types of Apprenticeships:

- **Advanced Apprenticeship (level 3)**
These are equivalent to 2 'A' levels and generally last between one year and four years, although they can be longer. Will also gain relevant technical certificates or qualifications (depending on type of apprenticeship)
- **Higher Apprenticeship (level 4-7)**
Apprentices work towards work-based learning qualifications such as an NVQ Level 4 and, in some cases Foundation degree and university degrees. All levels can include vocational qualifications and academic qualifications.
- **Degree Apprenticeship (level 6-7)**
Degree Apprenticeships have been developed as part of higher apprenticeship standards, seeing apprentices achieving a full bachelor's or master's degree (Levels 6 and 7) as a core component of the apprenticeship. Apprentices study toward a particular degree, usually on

release from their day jobs at a particular university or institution, while working and being paid a proper wage.

Sponsored Degrees

In the current climate these are hard to obtain and competition is fierce, but well worth the effort if successful.

This is a partnership between an employer and one or more universities. The employer will pay the university fees and pays you a salary. Depending on the agreement, you may work for the company 2-3 days a week and attend university on the other days or you attend university during term time and work for the company during holidays and when you finish at university.

See Useful Websites for more information.

Other Paths to a Degree

Further Education (FE) Colleges

They have significantly cheaper fees and as students generally live at home, living and travel costs are reduced.

Open University www.open.ac.uk

Learn part-time with an annual course fee equivalent to £5,572 a year – but with the ability to work and earn a salary at the same time. You will need good time management and self-discipline to stick to the course and you may miss the social aspect of university.

Part-time Degrees

Many universities are now offering part-time degree courses to allow students to earn a salary through part-time employment and study the rest of the week. These usually take 4 rather than 3 years to complete. You are still entitled to financial loans and grants to help pay for these courses.

See Useful Websites for more details and future hand-outs.

Where do we go for help?

A vast array of information is available to help both parents and students with the process of choosing what and where they want to study or do when they leave Sixth Form.

The Centigrade report will hopefully help identify the types of courses that are most suited to your qualifications, interests and aspirations. The Degree Course descriptions book is incredibly informative. There is a lot of other factual information available in books from the library and we have enclosed a very comprehensive list of website resources.

In addition each university, and many individual departments within universities, produce their own prospectus - these are free. Students will have a chance to collect these at the **UCAS Higher Education Fair on Thursday 17 March**. All parents will receive the 'Parent Guide' giving key information about the UCAS application process. These will be distributed at the **Higher Education Parents' Evening on Thursday 21 April in the Sixth Form Centre**. The library also has a copy of all university prospectuses.

Remember

- **Mrs McLeod** and **Mrs Munford** can be contacted at any time if you have any queries or need specific help. Mrs Munford will be co-ordinating UCAS applications.
- **Mrs Clarkson**, (Sixth Form Librarian), is available to help you find information about careers and Higher Education options and will be providing individual help with personal statements
- **Julie McCaslin**, (UCAS Co-ordinator) All finished UCAS applications will be processed by Julie
- **Subject teachers** will give advice on specific subject areas

USEFUL WEBSITES

There is a vast array of websites and many reference books that can help you plan your future career and progression when leaving Sixth Form. Some are essential, others are useful!

Research using the internet

Applying to University

- UCAS: this site, apart from providing the electronic means of applying (UCAS Apply), has everything both a student and their adviser could need (course search, finance information for starters) with good links to every university site. www.ucas.com
- Push: written by students. www.push.co.uk

What to study?

- Centigrade www.coa2.co.uk/centigrade
- UK course finder www.ukcoursefinder.com
- www.bestcourse4me.com

Where to go?

- UCAS: course search and institution guide. www.ucas.com
- Unistats: information on student satisfaction, tariff points accepted and graduate destinations. <http://unistats.direct.gov.uk>
- The Complete University Guide: league tables. www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk
- The Guardian University Guide: league tables. www.guardian.co.uk/education/universityguide
- The Times University Guide: league tables. [www.thetimes.co.uk/Good Uni Guide](http://www.thetimes.co.uk/Good_Uni_Guide)
- Which? <http://university.which.co.uk/>
- What uni: video and written reviews. www.whatuni.com
- Open Days: university and college open day directory. www.opendays.com
- University websites: please note that the printed prospectus can be out of date so always check the university website
- Covers all sectors of education: www.hotcourses.com

Admissions Tests

- BioMedical Admissions Test for Medicine and Veterinary Science www.admissionstests.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/adt/bmat
- English Literature Admissions Test (ELAT) www.admissionstests.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/adt/elat
- Law National Admissions Test www.lnat.ac.uk/
- Sixth Term Examination Paper (STEP) www.admissionstests.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/adt/step
- Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA) Cambridge www.admissionstests.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/adt/tsacambridge
- TSA Oxford <http://www.admissionstests.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/adt/tsaoxford>
- TSA UCL www.admissionstests.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/adt/tsaucl
- UK Clinical Aptitude Test for Medicine and Dentistry www.ukcat.ac.uk

Graduate employment

- Prospects: go to 'careers advice', then 'options with your subject'. www.prospects.ac.uk
- Graduate Jobs: www.graduate-jobs.com
- Target Jobs: <http://targetjobs.co.uk>
- Milkround: www.milkround.com
- I Could: real life stories: <http://icould.com>
- Courses linked to job prospects: www.bestcourse4me.com

Gap Year and Work Experience

- Gap Year: www.gapyear.com
- Gap Year Jobs: www.gapyearjobs.co.uk
- Year in industry – paid work experience before university: www.yini.org.uk
- Volunteering Matters (formerly CSV): <http://volunteeringmatters.org.uk/>
- Go Gap Year: hints on planning travel: www.gogapyear.com
- Millennium Volunteers: <http://vinspired.com>
- www.yearoutgroup.org
- Alternatives to university: www.notgoingtouni.co.uk
- Volunteer projects for gap year: www.projects-abroad.co.uk

Study Abroad

- British Council: www.britishcouncil.org/erasmus
- Fulbright Commission: awards for study in the USA: www.fulbright.co.uk
- Brain Track: international index: www.braintrack.com
- UK Council for International Student Affairs: advice for UK students studying abroad. www.ukcisa.org.uk
- General tips and advice. www.studyoverseas.com
- www.unesco.org/education/studyingabroad
- www.topuniversities.com
- www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/world-university-rankings/
- www.degreesahead.co.uk
- www.eunicas.co.uk (co-ordinates applying to universities in Europe)

Learn and Earn after Sixth Form

- Careersbox: video job profiles: www.careersbox.co.uk
- www.openuniversity.co.uk/18to24
- Apprenticeship opportunities post-18: www.apprenticeships.org.uk
- www.notgoingtouni.co.uk
- Occupational information and careers choice: www.careers-gateway.co.uk
- I Could: real life stories: <http://icould.com>
- General careers advice: www.isco.org.uk

Professional Scholarships

- Bconstructive: construction. www.bconstructive.co.uk
- Institute of Physics: undergraduate bursary scheme. www.iop.org
- Institute of Engineering and Technology: www.theiet.org
- Institution of Civil engineers: www.ice.org.uk
- Institution of Mechanical Engineers: www.imeche.org

Finance

- UCAS www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/finance-and-support
- Student finance: www.gov.uk/browse/education/student-finance
- www.scholarship-search.org.uk
- NHS bursaries. www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/Students.aspx
- Money saving expert – advice on grants and funding whilst learning. www.moneysavingexpert.com/
- www.studentcashpoint.co.uk
- Grant search: www.unigrants.co.uk
- National Association of Student Advisors: www.nasma.org.uk

The Prospects website: www.prospects-sales.co.uk has information about most reference materials and software relating to HE and graduate career choices.

Advice for Students applying to University

- Read the Centigrade report carefully. It has been compiled using **your** responses. If suggested courses are very different to what you want to study then you need to think carefully about why this is? (In a recent survey 39% of university students interviewed felt they had selected the wrong course!)
- Research the courses and universities carefully
- Make sure you have done some research prior to the UCAS fair on 19 March so you gain as much as possible from the event
- Choose your five university courses very carefully. Do not choose a course unless you really want to study it and do not choose any university unless you are willing to stay there for at least 3 years (you do not know which ones will make you an offer!!)
- Check carefully which subjects within your chosen degree course are compulsory and which are optional - courses vary considerably between universities
- Make sure you have a realistic chance of attaining the UCAS points required for each course. Remember universities work on 'predicted grades/points' not what you hope to get!
- Avoid disappointment by being sensible and following advice. Choose courses which are within your capabilities. It is worth selecting courses that that require a range of different point scores so you have a 'back up' just in case you don't get the required points needed
- Remember a very large number of students will be applying as well as you. You will need to sell yourself through your Personal Statement. It is not too late to ensure you have the relevant work experience etc that will make you 'stand out from the crowd'
- Finally – don't leave things to the last minute and ask for help if you need it

Good luck!

What Parents Can Do To Help

For many students the process of applying to university can be quite stressful. Parents can offer help and support in the following ways:

- Encourage students to begin the process of research into possible courses as soon as possible rather than leaving it to the last minute
- Help students to visit nearby universities during weekends and/or holidays in order to get a 'feel' for the different type of institution available
- Encourage students to be realistic so that the majority of the courses for which they apply require grades which the student has been forecast to attain
- Help students to have a timetable so that they can work their way through the process step by step without being rushed
- Encourage students to ask for help
- Acquaint yourselves with the guideline and information sheets that will be given to students throughout the months to come

A representative from Birmingham University will be at St Benedict's on Thursday 21 April at 7pm. They will be presenting on all aspects of university applications. It is very important that you attend on this evening if your son/daughter is intending to go to university.

UCAS Tariff

International Baccalaureate (IB)

Higher Level Certificate		Standard Level Certificate		TOK		Extended Essay	
Grade	Tariff points	Grade	Tariff points	Grade	Tariff points	Grade	Tariff points
7	56	7	28	A	12	A	12
6	48	6	24	B	10	B	10
5	32	5	16	C	8	C	8
4	24	4	12	D	6	D	6
3	12	3	6	E	4	E	4
2	0	2	0				
1	0	1	0				

A/AS Level

GCE A Level	Tariff points	GCE AS Level	Tariff points
A*	56	A	20
A	48	B	16
B	40	C	12
C	32	D	10
D	24	E	6
E	16		

BTEC qualifications (QCF) (Suite of qualifications known as Nationals)

Extended Diploma	Tariff points	Diploma	Tariff points	Certificate	Tariff points
D*D*D*	168	D*D*	112	D*	28
D*D*D	160	D*D	104	D	24
D*DD	152	DD	96	M	16
DDD	144	DM	80	P	8
DDM	128	MM	64		
DMM	112	MP	48		
MMM	96	PP	32		
MMP	80				
MPP	64				
PPP	48				

GENERAL GLOSSARY

(All terms relating to the UCAS process are explained in the UCAS Parents Guide – which will be issued at the UCAS Evening Thursday 3 April at 7.00pm)

ACCESS COURSE A course designed to prepare students over the age of 19 without necessary qualifications for entry on to Higher Education courses.

APPRENTICE Many companies are employing students from Sixth Forms on Higher or Advanced Apprenticeships to 'earn while they learn'.

ACCESS TO LEARNING FUND Money available to students who might run into financial difficulty during their university course. This money does not have to be paid back.

BACHELOR OF ARTS (BA) or BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (BSc.) The majority of degrees awarded by universities will be called either Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor Science. Some subjects can be studied either as a BA Hons or BSc Hons, dependent on combination of subjects taken.

BURSARY Additional money available to some students to help with the cost of their course. This money does not have to be paid back.

CAMPUS The area or areas where a university and its facilities are located.

CLEARING A UCAS run system which allows students who do not get the grades for their chosen university or course to apply for vacant places at other universities.

COMBINED HONOURS DEGREE Several related subjects studied to degree level.

DEFERRED ENTRY Some students may choose to delay going to university for 12 months, possible because they wish to take a Gap Year. Such students can still apply at the same time in their Year 13 year (although they can choose to apply the following autumn instead if they prefer), but must indicate on their application that they wish to defer their entry.

DEGREE A Higher Education qualification, an Honours Degree or a Foundation Degree.

DUAL HONOURS DEGREE or JOINT HONOURS DEGREE A degree where two subjects are studied in depth at the same time. The student's study time is split equally between the two subjects.

FOUNDATION DEGREE A vocational Higher Education qualification. Usually takes two years to complete full-time and can be taken at college rather than university. Many students study part-time while working. Can sometimes be topped up to get an Honours Degree.

FOUNDATION YEAR A one year course taking place before the start of an Honours Degree. A Foundation Year is designed to prepare student who do not fully meet the entry requirements for the degree programme of their choice.

GAP YEAR A year out before starting a full-time university course.

GRADUATE A person who has successfully completed their course and been awarded a degree.

GRANT Money given by the government to students from low income families to help with the cost of university. This money does not have to be repaid.

HND 'HIGHER NATIONAL DIPLOMA' A vocational Higher Education qualification usually taking two years full-time. Can sometimes be topped up to get an Honours Degree.

HALLS OF RESIDENCE University accommodation, often located on the university campus.

HONOURS DEGREE An academic Higher Education course. Usually takes three years to complete full-time. Students commonly study for a BA (Bachelor of Arts) or BSc (Bachelor of Science).

INTERVIEWS Some university courses require some students to come for an interview before they consider making an offer. These vary enormously from a general chat to more rigorous questioning. Not all university departments interview applicants as more attention is given to the Personal Statement and School Reference.

MATURE STUDENT In Higher Education, a person who is aged 21 or over when they start their course.

OFFERS Universities are not obliged to make an offer of a place to each student that applies. Instead they do so only to a selection of applicants. Some students will receive unconditional offers – although these are rare – which means that the student has fulfilled the academic entrance requirements and so the university is prepared to admit that student to the course. Most students receive a conditional offer, which means that the university will admit the student to the course provided they satisfy the conditions specified. This will be either the points needed (see UCAS Tariff) or the IB Diploma grade required to gain the place. All offers from universities are made via UCAS who will contact students as soon as they hear from universities.

OPEN DAY An event put on by the university where Year 12 students can look around the university. Open Days help people decide which universities to apply for.

OPEN UNIVERSITY Enables students to gain a degree through distance learning.

PERSONAL STATEMENT This is part of the application form where the student is required to say something about themselves. It is intended to give the student the opportunity to convince admissions tutors of their suitability, commitment and enthusiasm to study a particular course.

POSTGRADUATE A graduate student who is undertaking a second or further degree.

PROSPECTUS A brochure of courses produced by all universities.

REFERENCE Part of the UCAS application form where the school comments on the student's suitability to study at university, based on summary subject tutor statements drawn from continuous assessments and considered opinions on student skills, attainment and future potential.

SANDWICH COURSE A degree course which includes an extra year during which the student is on a work placement relevant to their degree.

SINGLE HONOURS DEGREE A degree course where the student studies only one subject in depth.

SOCRATES / ERASMUS A scheme providing funding to universities to help with the development of European links and to encourage students to spend part of their degree living and studying in Europe.

SPECIFIC ADMISSIONS TESTS Some subjects have added Admission Tests such as LNAT (National Admissions Tests for Law), STEP (Sixth Term Examination Papers) for Maths, TSA (Thinking Skills Assessment) or UKCAT (UK Clinical Aptitude Test) or GAMSAT (Graduate Medical School Admissions Tests) for some medical and dentistry schools.

SPONSORSHIP Under sponsorship programmes, some companies or organisations pay part of a student's course fees. In return the student may work for them during holidays or after they graduate.

STUDENT LOAN Student loans are available to all students to help pay their living costs and fees. They are low interest and do not have to be paid back until the student is working and earning a specific amount.

TUITION FEES The contribution a student makes to the cost of their university course.

UCAS (UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES ADMISSIONS SYSTEM) UCAS processes all applications to UK universities for undergraduate courses.

UCAS TARIFF POINT SYSTEM Some universities use a tariff points system when making offers for places. The system gives a points value to grades ie. a B grade at A Level is 100 UCAS points or a 29 point IB Diploma is equal to 370 UCAS points.

UNDERGRADUATE A person applying or studying for a first degree.