



HIGHER EDUCATION

Information Guide

2018 entry

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1. Introduction

This booklet is a helpful guide to assist you with an application to an institution of Higher Education. Students will be thinking about post 18 options with many exploring the possibility of applying to university in Autumn 2017. UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admission Service) is a UK based organisation whose main role is to operate the application process for British Universities. They provide some excellent, not to be missed resources for parents and students which can be downloaded from the UCAS website.

There is a direct link to the UCAS website from the school website.

2. The Course

a. Degrees:

- Usually lasts three years or four for sandwich degrees
- Normally requires 3 A levels or equivalent and GCSEs
- Courses can be vocational e.g. engineering or non- vocational e.g. philosophy
- Degrees can be:
 - **single** honours concentrating on one subject
 - **joint** honours – mainly studying 2 or 3 subjects
 - **modular** where a degree programme can be 'built' up from across a number of core and subsidiary subjects
 - **sandwich** studying a subject and combining this with a placement in industry
 - **BA – Bachelor of Art** e.g. History, Music
 - **BSC – Bachelor of Science** e.g. Physics, Natural Sciences

b. Foundation Degrees:

- Usually lasts 2 years and are equivalent to the first 2 years of an honours degree
- These should combine academic and work based learning and be delivered in combination with employers
- Usually have flexible study methods, part-time, distance learning etc and also more flexible entry requirements
- Offered in vocational subjects
- Usually delivered at Colleges of Higher Education in partnership with an awarding University
- Can be possible to enter the final year of a degree after satisfactory completion of the Foundation Degree. The Honours degree year is usually delivered at the partner University

c. BTEC Foundation Diploma in Art and Design

- This was devised to allow students some extra time to develop their skills and interests before applying to University
- Usually offered at Colleges although they can be offered at Universities
- Normally requires an A level in Art and Design and a portfolio of work
- Although an A level is often required for entrance, this is actually classed as a Level 3 FE course
- Vocational qualification with progression into BA degree or employment

The prestigious universities/departments which receive more applications than places will continue to use A levels as the basis for offers. They will often name acceptable 'A' level subjects. There will be more emphasis on GCSE results due to the A Level reform, with the majority of courses becoming linear.

For example:

To study Physiotherapy (BSC) at X University the required grades are AAB with an A in Biology or PE.

The other universities with lower rankings will use the points system and will be flexible, allowing students to accumulate points from their AS and A levels.

3. The Institution/University

There is no such thing as a typical university. The major variations are as follows:

- The entry requirements
- The size
- Campus – town/city
- The location
- The style/quality of teaching
- The length of terms
- The type of courses offered and content
- The 'prestige'/rank
- The employment record/destination of graduates
- The value of the degree
- The level and quality of work
- The expectations
- Cost of living in the area
- Study Facilities
- Accommodation available
- Local amenities such as shops, banks, post office, laundry
- Student Union (well organised with clubs, societies, sport and recreation facilities)
- Security
- Student welfare and support

The quality varies from department to department within any university.

4. The Russell Group of Universities / League Tables

The Russell Group represents 24 leading universities which are committed to maintaining the highest levels of academic excellence in both teaching and research.

- University of Birmingham
- University of Bristol
- University of Cambridge
- Cardiff University
- Durham University
- University of Edinburgh
- University of Exeter
- University of Glasgow
- Imperial College London

- King's College London
- University of Leeds
- University of Liverpool
- London School of Economics & Political Science
- University of Manchester
- Newcastle University
- University of Nottingham
- University of Oxford
- Queen Mary University London
- Queen's University Belfast
- University of Sheffield
- University of Southampton
- University College London
- University of Warwick
- University of York

However, it is worth checking league tables for your chosen course. You want to apply to the best university for your subject, and that's not always a Russell Group University.

University League Table for 2017

1. Cambridge
2. Oxford
3. London School of Economics
4. Imperial College London
5. St Andrews
6. Durham
7. Loughborough
8. Warwick
9. Lancaster
10. University College London
11. Surrey
12. Bath
13. Exeter
14. East Anglia (UEA)
15. Birmingham
16. Leeds
17. Southampton
18. Sussex
19. Edinburgh
20. York

Source: The Complete University Guide

5. Other things to consider

- Student make up – Ratio of males to females, state to private school educated, mature students to school leavers, international to home students, part-time to full-time, post graduate to undergraduate can all make a difference to atmosphere.
- Does the institution emphasise teaching or research?
- Quality and reputation of the institution for the subject that you want to study.
- The number of applicants for places on average for the course.
- Is a formal interview part of the selection procedure?
- Is it an advantage or disadvantage to take a GAP year?

6. Sources of Information:

- Visit Open Days
- Experience a Taster Day/Student Shadowing
- Student Guides – Sixth Form (SF2)
- Prospectuses – Sixth Form (SF2)
- Higher Education Reference Material – Sixth Form (SF2)
- University Websites
- Sixth Form Studies sessions led by university staff on various topics
- Higher Education Conventions
- 1 – 1 Careers guidance meetings from the CEIAG Team
- Mock interviews

Comparing Universities

- Compare the best University and degree courses for free. Investigate course rankings, reviews, fees and open days to help you decide at www.whatuni.com

UCAS Sources of Information:

- Parents can sign up for monthly e-newsletters at www.ucas.com/parentform and receive a copy of the Parent Guide
- Unravel the myths of what a place at University means financially at:
www.gov.uk/unimoney
www.thestudentroom.co.uk/studentfinance
www.gov.uk/student-finance
- Publications are available to assist you with the application process including the UCAS Guide to Getting into university and college which can be found at www.ucas.com
- Watch “How to” video guides at www.ucas.tv for a step by step look at the application process
- Got a question? Visit www.facebook.com/ucasonline and seek expert advice
- “Follow” and tweet the team at www.twitter.com/ucas_online

7. a. UCAS/BTEC Points:

GCE A Level	
GRADE	TARIFF POINTS
A*	56
A	48
B	40
C	32
D	24
E	16

GCE AS Level	
GRADE	TARIFF POINTS
A	20
B	16
C	12
D	10
E	6

BTEC Level 3 Subsidiary Diploma	
GRADE	TARIFF POINTS
D*	56
D	48
M	32
P	16

D = Distinction
M = Merit
P = Pass

EXTENDED PROJECT (STAND ALONE)	
GRADE	TARIFF POINTS
A*	28
A	24
B	20
C	16
D	12
E	8

7. b. UCAS Form

- 4 sections to complete and input 5 choices
- Completed online
- £24 paid directly to UCAS
- When 'Pay and send' it comes to the Sixth Form team for checking

8. Admissions Tests:

Some universities and colleges require students to pass an admission test, as well as standard qualifications if they are applying for courses in certain subjects.

***BioMedical Admissions Test (BMAT)**

For entry to medicine, veterinary medicine and related courses.

Graduate Medical School Admissions Test (GAMSAT)

For graduate entry into medicine and dentistry courses.

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.

***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.

Oxbridge Admissions Tests:

***English Literature Admissions Test (ELAT)**

For entry to English courses at the University of Oxford.

***History Aptitude Test (HAT)**

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

***Mathematics Aptitude Test (MAT)**

For entry to Mathematics or Computer Science, or a joint honours degree involving Mathematics 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 and Economics at the University of Cambridge.

***Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA Oxford), formerly known as the PPE Admissions Test**

For entry to Politics & Economics (PPE), Economics and Management (E&M), Experimental Psychology (EP) or Psychology and Philosophy at the University of Oxford.

* These admissions tests can be taken at HUS.

Students intending to take one of these admission tests need to complete a registration form, available in June (Submission deadline TBC).

9. What to do next?

- Research courses/universities
- a. Look at prospectuses
- b. Go on the UCAS website
- c. Check University websites
- d. Go to open days
- Attend the UCAS convention in London on Monday 27th March
- Talk to teachers/tutors/Sixth Form Team for advise
- Work on your personal statement
- June onwards – start your UCAS application

Research:

A student needs to consider all these points:

- Do I want to study for another three years or more?
- What course would I like to study?
- Would I like to study a vocational or non vocational course?
- Would I like to study more than one subject?
- What grades am I likely to get?
- What type of environment do I want to live in?
- Would I prefer to stay close to home?
- Do I have enough information to be able to make a choice?
- Will a degree help me in the future?
- What student facilities are important to me?
- How high or low is the graduate employment rate?
- Is work experience a pre-requisite?
- Entry requirements
- Quality of teaching
- The style of teaching – the mix of large lectures, classroom sized lessons, tutorials and seminars vary a lot
- The actual content of the degree, (degrees with the same subject title can be completely different in content from institute to institute)
- The contacts with business and employment records of past students
- The size and location and distance from home
- The cost of living in the area
- Facilities/clubs and societies
- Is it an advantage or disadvantage to take a GAP year?

Unsure where a subject can take you:

Visit the official graduate website to find out what kind of careers your degree qualifies you for at

www.prospects.ac.uk

10. HUS process:

For the vast majority of degree courses, students can apply to UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service). We will issue a confirmed UCAS timeline in June 2017. (Depending on UCAS published dates this is subject to change)

6th September 2017	Applications can be sent to UCAS from 6 th September.
2nd October 2017	Final deadline for Oxbridge Applications to the Sixth Form Team.
15th October 2017	Deadline for receipt at UCAS of applications to the universities of Oxford or Cambridge and for all medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine and veterinary science courses.
15th October 2017	Ideal date for best reception of applications at universities.
6th November 2017	Final deadline for all other applications to the Sixth Form Team.
15th January 2018	Last date for all applications to reach UCAS.
25th February 2018	UCAS EXTRA opens
24th March 2018	Application deadline for Art & Design courses except those listed with 15 th January deadline.
31st March 2018	If UCAS received application by 15 th January, the universities should aim to have sent their decisions by this date (but they can take longer.)
2nd May 2018	Reply by deadline for offers received before 31 st March 2018.
7th June 2018	Reply by deadline for offers received after 31 st March 2018.
30th June 2018	Applications received after this date will be entered into Clearing.
4th July 2018	UCAS Extra closes
12th July 2018	If applied by 30 th June and awaiting a decision, universities need to send their decision by this date if they do not, UCAS make any outstanding choices unsuccessful on their behalf.
19th July 2018	Reply to any offers received by this date.
16th August 2018	'A' level results published and Adjustment opens for registration.
31st August 2018	Adjustment closes on this date.
Late August, early September 2018	Clearing.
20th September 2018	This is the last date applications may be accepted for courses starting in 2018.
End of September 2018 (Date TBC)	The Clearing vacancy search is closed after this date. Applicants should contact universities direct to discuss vacancies. Clearing choices can still be added in Track.
23rd October 2018	Last date to add a Clearing choice. This is the last date a university or college can accept an application in Clearing.

Adjustment

If your son/daughter passes their exams with better results than expected and exceeds the requirements of their firm choice, they have the opportunity to reconsider where and what to study. To use Adjustment, a student will need to register in Track.

Clearing

Clearing is a service available between July and September, but for most students it is used after the exam results are published in August. It can help students without a university or college place to find suitable vacancies on higher education courses. If students are flexible and have reasonable exam results, there is still a good chance they will find another course through Clearing.

11. USEFUL WEBSITES

Careers:

www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk
www.careersbox.co.uk
www.prospects.ac.uk
www.bestcourse4me.com
www.plotr.co.uk

Government student finance website:

www.direct.gov.uk/student-finance

Quality of teaching:

www.unistats.direct.gov.uk

University and course profiles:

www.ucas.com
www.push.co.uk
www.aimhigherwm.ac.uk
www.nus.org.uk
www.whatuni.com
www.university.which.co.uk
www.applytouni.com

University League Tables:

www.guardian.co.uk/education/table
www.thetimes.co.uk
www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk

Gap year:

www.volunteeringmatters.org.uk
www.gapyear.com
www.goabroad.com
www.frontier.ac.uk
www.realgap.co.uk

Finance:

www.slc.co.uk (Student Loans Company)
www.dfes.gov.uk/student-support
www.egas-online.org (Education Grants Advisory)
www.studentmoneynet.co.uk
www.direct.gov.uk

Scholarship Search:

www.scholarship-search.org.uk

National Bureau for Students with Disabilities:

www.skill.org.uk
www.direct.gov.uk You can find out more about student support and Disabled Student Allowances (DSA)

Volunteering:

www.volunteeringmatters.org.uk

Alternative Options to University:

www.notgoingtouni.co.uk
www.studentladder.com
www.apprenticeships.gov.uk
www.allaboutschoollleavers.co.uk