



Great Marlow School

Excellence • Compassion • Integrity

MOVING ON



THE NEXT STEPS



YOUR GUIDE TO HIGHER EDUCATION,
APPRENTICESHIPS AND CAREERS
OR TAKING A GAP YEAR

What next?

This booklet is an essential tool for preparing students for the time after leaving Great Marlow, whether applying for university, an apprenticeship or a job or taking a Gap Year.

The booklet is divided into different sections. However, some sections do overlap. For example, there may be some helpful tips in the UCAS section on Personal Statements for those applying for a job, because employers require something similar when a job is applied for.

A wealth of further information is available on all the topics included in this booklet, so please be motivated to research your chosen pathway.

The Sixth Form team recognise that, for many students, the choice of pathway will change once, twice, maybe more, over the next year. For all, it is important that students begin to make initial decisions about their future.

CHOICES, CHOICES

IT IS ONCE AGAIN DECISION TIME, AND
HERE ARE YOUR POSSIBILITIES:

UNIVERSITY OR COLLEGE

- • gain valuable skills and a qualification to help you follow your chosen career.

APPRENTICESHIPS/WORK

- • apply for jobs now, or start your own business, with the aim to work up to your future goals.

TRAINING

- • prepare for the world of work, or learn on the job while you work.

VOLUNTEERING

- • gain experience to help you towards your work or study aspirations.

TRAVEL

- • get cultural insights during working holidays, learning, conservation or teaching.

CONTENTS

3	UNIFROG
5	UCAS
6	Tuition Fees
8	UCAS Application Process and Key Dates
9	How to Choose your Higher Education Course
10	Useful HE Websites
11	UCAS Points Conversion Table
11	Completing a Skills Audit
14	Personal Statements
15	How to Write a Personal Statement
19	Examples
27	Step-by-Step Process to Applying Online with UCAS
31	APPRENTICESHIPS/WORK-BASED LEARNING
32	Apprenticeships - the basic facts
34	Useful Websites
35	JOBS
36	CVs - putting one together and what to include
46	Example CVs
48	Interview techniques
50	Useful Job websites
51	GAP YEAR
52	Gap Year Information
53	Why Choose a Gap Year?
53	Useful Gap Year websites
54	FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

UNIFROG

Unifrog is the complete destinations platform, a one-stop-shop for whole-school careers guidance. Unifrog's mission is to level the playing field when it comes to young people finding the best opportunities for them.

HOW CAN UNIFROG HELP ME?

IN MAKING THE BEST CHOICE FOR YOU!

ALL YOUR DATA IS SECURELY PROTECTED. YOU WILL CREATE YOUR UNIQUE LOG-IN NAME AND PASSWORD WHEN YOU SIGN UP.

Unifrog brings into one place every apprenticeship, university course and college course in the UK, as well as career opportunities, such as MOOCs and School Leaver Programmes.

The aim is to bring all the available information into a single, impartial, user-friendly platform that helps you to make the best choices, and submit the strongest applications.

The platform makes it easy for you to write your CVs and Personal Statements and record your key skills. Teachers can give you feedback, and write references.

The Sixth Form team will help you with the whole signing up process and how you manage the Unifrog site once you have logged in.

Where does Unifrog's data come from?

Lots of places. This includes UCAS, the National Apprenticeships Service, The National Careers Service, Unistats, HESA, The Guardian, HEPI, the Cabinet Office, the Office for National Statistics, the Commission for Employment and Skills, the Department for Business Innovation and Skills, Ofsted, every UK university, UK university alumni, FutureLearn, Coursera, Udacity, every college at Oxford and Cambridge, and QS. All the data is bang up to date - for example, apprenticeships vacancies are updated every night.

unifrog

UCAS

UCAS is the organisation responsible for managing applications to higher education courses in the UK.

IT IS THE ONLY WAY OF APPLYING.

U

tuition fees

Many of you may, currently, be cautious about applying to university because of tuition fees. Hopefully, these basic facts will help make the situation clearer.

All institutions are currently allowed to charge up to £9,250 per year for a course, providing they make extra provisions of bursaries for disadvantaged students.

STUDENTS DO NOT HAVE TO PAY THIS UP-FRONT

Students can receive a **TUITION FEE LOAN**, which will be paid directly to the university or college. Repayment for this loan does not start until earnings are at least £27,295 a year (or £2,274 a month/ £524 a week).

Students do not have to take the loan for tuition fees; it can be paid for directly.

The loan is repaid through the income tax system; an employer takes a specified amount at source, reducing the take-home pay of the employee; this ensures no debt collectors come chasing.

The current threshold is £27,295. The threshold is designed to rise in line with average earnings. Students will be expected to repay 9% of everything above that threshold.

Students repay 9% of everything earned annually above £27,295 but should circumstances change, like redundancy or a pay cut, the repayments drop accordingly. You can make additional voluntary payments at any time, see gov.uk for information.

Students stop paying the loan when they have cleared the debt or 30 years have lapsed, whichever comes first. Therefore, if you never have a job earning over the threshold, you'll never repay.

Students may also be entitled to a **MAINTENANCE LOAN** to help with living costs of up to £8,400 if living at home and up to £9,978 if living away from home. If you live in London, away from home, you can be loaned up to £13,022. A Maintenance Loan for living costs is based on household income. For more detailed information see www.gov.uk

WHAT CAN YOU DO NOW?

UCAS APPLICATIONS CALENDAR 2023-2024

THE EARLIER
YOU SEND IN
YOUR UCAS
APPLICATION,
THE MORE
LIKELY IT IS
THAT YOU
WILL RECEIVE
AN OFFER

BY THE END OF THE SUMMER TERM:

- • You should have decided on the subject area you wish to study.

If you have no idea what to study:

book a careers interview, see Mr Hollyman, Miss Jones, Mrs Evans or Mrs Southon,

speak to your tutor

access the websites in this pack

apply for a Sixth Form bursary if you consider yourself eligible.

- • You should have attended/ plan to attend university open days and appropriate summer schools.

Go to - www.opendays.com where you will find all the dates you need to know (3 days absence from school is allowed to attend open days for colleges and universities).

- • You should have prepared your personal statement and had it checked by your tutor.

- • You should have registered for UCAS.

Details of how to register is documented in this booklet, alternatively, ask your tutor.

- • You should have arranged any further necessary work experience.

Work experience is especially important if applying for teaching, medicine, veterinary science or physiotherapy, but it is also useful for all other courses, to show evidence of enthusiasm.

Important dates

DO NOT LEAVE IT TO THE LAST MINUTE!

5th September 2023	applications can be submitted from this date
18th September 2023 - GMS Oxbridge deadline	.. for tutors to receive applications from those applying to Oxford, Cambridge, medicine, dentistry, veterinary science and law courses requiring LNAT.
6pm, 16th October 2023 - UCAS deadline	.. for applications for Oxford, Cambridge, medicine, dentistry and veterinary science.
19th October 2023 (half-term) - GMS internal deadline	.. for all UCAS applications. This gives tutors time to write references and meet UCAS deadlines.
October/November 2023 - March 2024 - university interviews continue, offers are made by universities	Track your offers on 'UCAS Apply'.
31st January 2024 6pm - UCAS final deadline	.. for receipt of all applications.
28th February 2024 - UCAS Extra	Students who made their 5 choices but are without any offers can add additional choices to their applications to try to secure a university place. See UCAS.ac.uk
March 2024 - Financial Support Application Form open	www.studentfinance.direct.gov.uk www.gov.uk/studentfinance
End of April 2024	Deadline for the Financial Support Forms to be returned.
19th May 2024	Final Statement of Decision must be sent to UCAS. (You can only hold two offers, one firm choice, the other as insurance.) KEEP AN EYE ON DATES ON UCAS WEBSITE.
June – July 2024	Clearing Documentation will be sent by UCAS to students without an offer. Make sure you keep this document in a safe place.
August 2024	Remaining vacancies are filled through Clearing and UCAS Extra. 31st August – Adjustment ends
September 2024	University course begins

CHOOSING A HIGHER EDUCATION

1

Decide on the subject area you wish to apply for – refer to the list below for help, if you have no idea.

- www.ucas.com - UCAS Course search
- www.ukcoursefinder.com
- www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk
- www.merlinhelpsstudents.com
- Arrange for an appointment with Gill Southon, the school's CIAG advisor

REMEMBER to focus on the subject areas that you enjoy and find interesting.

2

Compile a list of course titles to be considered together with the relevant universities. To do this use:

- the UCAS website – www.ucas.com
- university prospectuses/ websites

REMEMBER to be realistic about the grades you are likely to achieve. Also, consider the location of the university campus or city/town as well as the geographic location.

3

Produce a "short list" of course titles and universities. This step will require more thorough research:

- Use university prospectuses and websites.
- Go to www.unistats.com – the official university teaching quality site.
- Visit the universities you are interesting in.
- Phone or email university admissions tutors – well worth doing

REMEMBER that each university can provide graduate destination information. Find out about sporting activities, clubs etc. as well as accommodation.

4

Decide upon a final list of 5 courses for your UCAS application, this will cost you £27.50.

REMEMBER a university course is 3 or 4 years long, so it is worth spending the time choosing the right course in the right university.



Attend university open days, ask questions and take photographs: visit www.opendays.com. Next, narrow the field to two: a first choice and an insurance offer (this is a course that requires lower grades).

USEFUL HIGHER EDUCATION WEBSITES

www.ucas.com	is essential viewing for all higher education courses and application procedures
www.unistats.com	offers official teaching quality information on UK universities
www.thecompleteuniversity-guide.co.uk	gives comprehensive information on all aspects of UCAS for students, parents and carers, covering courses and finance
www.thebigchoice.com	gives an overview of universities and courses
www.push.co.uk	is a user-friendly guide to university choice
www.ukcoursefinder.com	is a free on-line test, which suggests possible degree courses to match an applicant's interests
www.thestudentroom.co.uk	is a student forum offering information and discussion about university and the application's procedure
www.ukcat.ac.uk	UKCAT is the way to apply online to sit the UK clinical aptitude test for medicine and dentistry
www.bmat.org.uk	BMAT gives information on the Biomedical Admissions Test – required by medical and veterinary schools
www.lnat.ac.uk - LNAT	is the way to apply online to sit the National Admissions Test required for most law schools
www.indeed.co.uk/Foundation-Degree-Courses	go here to view the new 2 year work related Higher Education Qualifications
www.opendays.com	documents when open days and taster courses are being run – search by college/university and month of visit
www.dfes.gov.uk/studentssupport	gives information about finance and student loans, includes list of LEAs
www.slc.co.uk	is the official site for the Students Loans Company
www.scholarship-search.org.uk	offers information about scholarships and awards
www.prospects.ac.uk	is the UK official graduate careers website

Many national newspapers also produce university sections at key points in the year, certainly at results time and in September.

Keep a look out for them or visit these websites:

www.thetimes.co.uk
www.independent.co.uk
www.telegraph.co.uk
www.guardian.co.uk

UCAS points tariff



Calculate a UCAS points total. Be realistic with the calculation of the points

End of Year 12:

(according to progress grades/
mock exams)

End of Year 13:

A-level

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

Consider whether, as an individual, there are any other UCAS points that could be used to boost the total, for example, those involved in Young Enterprise, Duke of Edinburgh etc.

* Please note Art Foundation courses do not require application via UCAS. You should apply direct to colleges and provide a portfolio of work.

QUICK SKILLS AUDIT

Working on your own, or with another student, identify the skills that you have, or have used and record them below.

Communication		Caring for others		Photography	
Numeracy		Negotiation		Cookery	
Using IT		Showing motivation		Public speaking	
Team working		Motivating others		Decorating	
Problem solving		Designing and making		Giving presentations	
Time management		First Aid		Coping with new situations	
Planning		Driving		Analysing information	
Organising		Map reading		Repairing machines	

What do you do?	What skills do you use?
Hobbies and interests	
Subjects and courses	
Other: (sports, organisations, performances)	

APPLYING TO HE

There are some important decisions to make in this process. Completing the tick boxes below will help to focus ideas.

1. Choice of course

I would like a course that:

- ☐ is the same or similar to one or more of my A-level subjects
- ☐ is related to an interest outside of my studies
- ☐ will provide me with preparation for a future career

2. Type of degree

The type of degree I would like to study for is:

- ☐ single honours – one subject only
- ☐ joint honours – two subjects, equal time spent on both
- ☐ combined honours – two or more subjects, proportion of each may vary
- ☐ modular – wide range of choice and flexibility
- ☐ sandwich/ placement – an organised period of time spent in industry or abroad
- ☐ Foundation
- ☐ Higher National Diploma (HND)

3. Place of study

Use the prospectuses to make sure that you are considering institutions that will suit you. Tick the boxes that apply to you:

- ☐ I would like to study at a large university
- ☐ I would like to study at a small university
- ☐ I would like to go to a campus university
- ☐ It is important to me to go to a university with a good reputation
- ☐ It is important that the department I go to within the university has a good reputation
- ☐ I would like to live in a city
- ☐ Graduate destinations from the university I go to are important to me
- ☐ Sporting facilities are important to me
- ☐ I want to go somewhere with an active students' union
- ☐ I want to go somewhere within reasonable distance from home
- ☐ I want to go somewhere far from home
- ☐ I want to study somewhere within daily travelling distance of home

4. Where to live

- ☐ I want to go somewhere where halls of residence are guaranteed for first year students
- ☐ I want to go somewhere where I can live independently, for example in a shared house
- ☐ I want to live somewhere where my meals are provided (catered)
- ☐ I want to live at home

Choices Remember to be realistic!

Research is needed before completing this section. Go to www.ucas.com or individual university websites.

The universities I am considering are:

Name	Reason

Recalculate a points total using the prompts below.

The subjects being studied and the grades being aimed for are:		
The grades being predicted by teachers are: :		

The following courses match my level of entry qualification (A level grades or UCAS points total):

--

The courses being considered are:

University	Course Title	Standard Offer

PERSONAL STATEMENTS

GETTING NOTICED

The Personal Statement may be the only written work that the course tutor sees before making a decision: make sure it is organised and literate. Pay attention to **grammar, spelling and punctuation**. A statement filled with errors will give a negative impression of your writing ability and the effort you have made in applying. Your statement must be written in English (or it can be in Welsh if you are applying to Welsh universities and colleges).

The Undergraduate Admissions Manager at The University of Nottingham told us:

"These types of skills are the basics that academics will expect from someone at this level of education. Incorrect spelling, poor grammar and punctuation can make a poor impression on the reader. For courses such as English, these skills are of paramount importance."

KEY POINTS

Explain **why you want to study the course** you are applying for. If you mention your personal interests and hobbies, try to link them to the **skills and experience** required by the course.

The personal statement could be used as the basis for an **interview**, so be prepared to answer questions on it.

Writing about yourself is probably not something you do very often, so you might need to practise writing in this particular style. It is a good idea to list your hobbies and achievements, before deciding upon the ones that **demonstrate your strongest skills** and personality."

HOW DO I START?

- 1 Begin to record useful information for your personal statement as soon as possible; consult your National Record of Achievement, if you have one.
- 2 Ask somebody else about your achievements and strengths.
- 3 Do not minimise your achievements – mention them loudly and proudly.
- 4 Avoid beginning your statement with phrases like "I am applying for this course because..." You should endeavour to write to attract attention in the opening sentence.
- 5 Elaborate on general statements, eg "I enjoy reading ..." (What?), "I enjoy going to the cinema" (To see what type of film? What directors are you most interested in?)
- 6 **DO NOT LIE, OVEREXAGGERATE or PLAGIARISE!**
- 7 Always keep in mind the impression you want to make on your reader.
- 8 Use helpful sites – www.ucas.com (This has a short video clip on how to write a personal statement – click on Students, Applying, How to Apply, Your Personal Statement). www.studential.com, www.merlinhelpsstudents.com

How to write a personal statement



TWO IMPORTANT THINGS TO INCLUDE IN A PERSONAL STATEMENT ARE:

The reasons for applying for the course you've chosen

This is particularly important when you're applying for a subject that you have not studied before. Tell the university the reasons why the subject interests you, and include evidence to show you understand what is required by the course, eg if applying for psychology courses show that you know how scientific the subject is.

The reasons why you're suitable for the course

Tell the university tutor about the skills and experience you have had that will help you to succeed on the course.

Make sure you think about:

- how your current or previous studies relate to the course(s) that you have chosen
- any activities that demonstrate your interest in the course(s)
- why you want to go to university or college



There are reasons why applications are unsuccessful:

- The personal statement may not show sufficient understanding, relevance or knowledge about the course being applied for.
- The personal statement may not strongly support your desire to study your chosen degree or course.
- There may be a failure in demonstrating sufficient knowledge and interest in the subject in your personal statement.

- There may be competition for places on a popular course and the personal statement and experience documented applicants.

It is important to show why you want to study the course and what you can bring to it – especially as admissions tutors compare applications for the same course.

- The application form (including personal statement, reference and predicted grades) does not evidence accurate understanding of, or motivation for, a subject.
- The personal statement does not express a strong enough interest in the subject area of choice.

Applying to multiple courses

Remember that you only write one personal statement, which will be used for all your choices. Try not to mention a university or college by name, even if you're applying to only one place, because your personal statement cannot be changed if you apply to a different institution -later.

If you're applying for a joint degree you will need to explain why you are interested in both aspects of the joint programme.

If you're applying for different subjects or courses, you need to identify the common themes and skills that are relevant to your choices. For example, both mathematics and law are subjects where you have to think logically and apply rules. You may like both subjects because you enjoy solving problems, using theory, and natural or man-made laws to come to a correct conclusion.

If your chosen courses can't be linked by a common theme, think about your reasons for applying for such varied courses - it might be useful to speak to a careers adviser to get some guidance.

If you mention a subject in your personal statement and are applying for other courses, you may be asked by the university or college for additional information as to why you have done so.

Attract Attention

Some statements start with quotes, some include jokes, and others set out to be unusual or eye-catching in other ways. Sometimes it works, but it might have the opposite effect to what you hoped. The admissions' officer may not share your sense of humour, so be careful when trying to make your opening statement stand out.

THINGS TO DO, AND NOT TO DO, WHEN WRITING YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

Do create a list of your ideas before attempting to write the real thing.

Do expect to produce several drafts before being totally happy.

Do ask people you trust for their feedback.

Do check university and college prospectuses, websites and Entry Profiles, as they usually tell you the criteria and qualities that they want their students to demonstrate.

Do use your best English/Welsh and don't let spelling and grammatical errors spoil your statement.

Do be enthusiastic - if you show your interest in the course, it may help you secure a place.

Don't feel that you need to use elaborate language. If you try too hard to impress with long words that you are not confident using, the focus of your writing may be lost.

Don't say too much about things that are not relevant - redraft if you think that you have. Take a break and return to your statement when you feel more focused.

Don't lie - if you exaggerate you may get caught out in the interview if asked to elaborate on an interesting achievement.

Don't rely on a computer spell-checker as it will not correct all mistakes - proofread as many times as possible.

Don't leave it to the last minute - your statement will appear rushed, and important information may be left out.

Don't expect to be able to write your personal statement while watching TV or surfing the internet - this is your future.

Don't

Deferred entry

Deferred entry means you apply for university this year, but for a place starting in Sept 2024.

- 1 Give reasons for a deferred entry in the application.
- 2 Outline what the gap year will be used to do. Where possible, make the gap year relevant to your choice of degree, and show that you're keeping your mind active.

TUTOR TIME TASKS

What to Write About

To help the process, use the prompt boxes below.

Reasons for your choice of course:

Background to your interest in the subject :

Work experience/part-time work relevant to your subject choice – skills/experience:

Particular interests in current studies, especially if relevant to choice of degree course:

Career aspirations:

Leisure-time/sporting/social interests/SKILLS gained:

Other achievements eg: D of E Award, positions of responsibility, anything that makes you "stand out":

Any other experiences/awards/extensive travel (don't forget this may be very relevant to your course choice):

PERSONAL STATEMENTS EXEMPLAR



Personal Statement: Example 1

My Classical journey started in 2015 at Oxford University's Faculty of Classics. Through selection to study for an additional GCSE in Latin on Saturdays (OXLAT Outreach Programme), a passion was ignited in me for Roman Linguistics and Literature and the enthralling aspects of Roman Society. Learning Latin has helped me develop skills in logical cognition and grammatical analysis, vital tools for future academic discourse. My love of Philosophy also knows no limits and extends from Classical Philosophy to 20th Century ideas such as Existentialism. As a result, I am now highly motivated to pursue a degree encompassing both Classics and Philosophy.

To my delight, my ongoing study of Classics has been possible thanks to the Oxford Trinity College Advanced Classics Course (2017-2019) - a compelling undertaking of Ancient Greek, Civilisation and Classical Literature. The course has exposed me to texts with a personal touch, such as by writers Catullus, Sappho and my most admired, Marcus Aurelius. Tackling such texts with a background in A level Psychology allows me to reach fascinating conclusions about the authors. For example, I believe Marcus Aurelius used 'Meditations' to temper his negative emotions.

Greek artefacts are another area of interest, sparking from my attendance of the Ashmolean lecture entitled 'Greek Vase Painters and the Trojan War' and flourishing during my time at Reading University's Ure Museum. Handling these precious remnants brought the Hellenistic period to life and unearthed questions as to what the Ancients regarded as 'beautiful'. The subjectivity of beauty is also of Philosophical interest to me. Neil MacGregor's thought provoking 'A History of the World in 100 Objects' opened my eyes to early cross-culturalism, and kindled a desire to investigate the rise of monotheistic religions.

In an entirely self-taught manner, my knowledge has progressed naturally from Classics to Philosophy. I am at the stage of having read titles such as Nigel Warburton's 'Philosophy: The Classics' and 'Think' by Simon Blackburn. Philosophy podcasts are also a part of my daily life, with 'Philosophize This!' and 'Philosophy Bites' being amongst my favourites.

The synthesis between Classics and Philosophy can be seen in the Hellenistic Schools of

Thought, whose conflicting ideas on how to lead a 'Good Life' resonate with me. What I find

even more interesting is the prolonged and far reaching appeal of Stoicism throughout the ages

- documented by three diverse writers: Seneca the statesman, Marcus Aurelius the emperor, and Epictetus the ex-slave. My attendance at Stoicon 2018 (international Stoicism conference), has allowed me to investigate the ethical doctrines of Stoicism in a contemporary context. Outside of Philosophy and Classics, Art and Languages are my further love - hence my other A Levels. My passion for Art encapsulates many different media, and in particular illustration. Through my artistic endeavours I have learnt to appreciate aesthetics and find myself viewing the world through a critical lens, with an eye for detail. I also volunteer at a local art centre, supporting and encouraging children to explore their own artistic talents. I gain personal and professional satisfaction from this,

as well as developing my teaching skills. Having been exposed to spoken Italian from birth, I feel a strong connection to Romance Languages. A level Spanish re-enforces this. The links between Spanish, Italian, Latin and Greek intrigue me, and through exploration of texts, I love to grapple with the structures and complexities of these captivating languages.

I have reached a point in my academic journey where I am craving the opportunity to delve deeper into both Philosophy and Classics, while embracing the challenges and excitement of a formal university setting. I can think of nothing I now relish more than engaging in discussion and exchanging ideas with those sharing my enthusiasm for these wonderful disciplines.

Personal Statement: Example 2

To me, Psychology is not just about the how's and why's of the mind, but what you can do to improve, inspire and innovate perceptions and relationships around you. Four years ago, my cousin was diagnosed with autism; seeing him struggle with social development I wanted to learn more about the condition and how to facilitate his needs. I am an inquisitive individual, who endeavours to provide positive guidance to those around me. Helping and supporting people is a huge part of my life and being able to empathise is a quality I am proud of, and is one of the reasons I want to study psychology and pursue a career as an educational psychologist.

My A level studies have introduced me to biological psychology and I have developed a keen interest in Freud's psychodynamic explanation of personality development. This concept has further provoked my passion to understand moral dilemmas, together with my enthusiasm for cognition and mental processes which have given me a solid foundation to further my studies in this area. Day to day, I find myself observing others and putting those skills I have learnt into practice. For example, recognising and understanding the causes of a person's reaction to a particular situation, such as obedience, conformity or aggression. I have a very analytical mind and believe this will enhance my learning of this subject. My attention to detail and a questioning mindset is additional qualities that help me to understand new theories. I am especially interested in working with children as this is a most critical time in a person's life in terms of impressionability and governing their capacity to learn. This has led me to take on work experience within a local primary school, where I have gained first-hand experience of how children interact with their peers and teachers. I worked closely with a child who had ADHD, and was able to manage the difference with their needs and integrate them into a group setting, along with developing my patience and encouraging inclusiveness from the whole class.

Furthermore, I took on work experience at IT infrastructure provider Softcat where I developed interpersonal skills. These skills have benefitted me greatly when working as part of a team and learning to compromise and cooperate with different individuals. The job drove me to perform efficiently and accurately under pressure. I enhanced my IT knowledge and was able to use my initiative to take on new tasks and learn new processes. This has been an invaluable experience where I could develop business and teamwork skills which I have been able to apply not only in a work environment, but also when communicating with all types of people. Away from school, I dedicate time through my church to supporting a homeless centre on Monday nights. Those attending receive shelter, warmth, food as well as advice about housing and jobseeking. I enjoy meeting new people and catering for those less fortunate than I. In addition, I volunteer at the Salvation Army; all of these opportunities have shaped my career path and encouraged me to be respectful and kind to others. I have been fortunate enough to converse and intermingle with a range of people; in which acknowledging their needs has inspired me to further pursue my studies into psychology.

In my spare time, I enjoy photography because it has given me a keen eye for observing the world

around me. Another passion of mine is music; I have achieved grade 4 piano thus far and am self-taught to play the violin. Table tennis is a hobby of mine; we have a table tennis club at my local church and I am regularly involved in competitions. I enjoy socialising and talking to new people; my extra-curricular activities have enabled me to be perseverant under pressure while maintaining my high scholastic standards.

Overall, I believe this psychology course would be ideal to help me develop into my chosen career and, as a committed student, my work ethos would be an asset to the University.

Personal Statement: Example 3

Without a law and justice system our civilization would not be what it is today, it defines right and wrong and provides structure to our society. My enthusiasm for a career in law was awakened with the start of my A-Level studies. Consequently, I am continually seeking opportunities to expand my knowledge in all areas of the law, with the hope of having a career in this sector after graduating.

Through studying Law at A-Level, I have been able to investigate different sectors in greater detail and by reviewing relevant cases I have been able to understand how it affects people in different ways and in most cases brings justice to those who deserve it. The Law Gazette has been invaluable in expanding my knowledge of the law. As an avid reader, it has allowed me to better understand the subject, see how the law is affecting everyday life and how new case law is impacting lawyers and the legal sector. Furthermore, from visiting both Reading Crown Court and Wycombe Magistrates Court, I was able to see lawyers in action which further confirmed that this is a career I want to pursue. These visits made me think about the more practical applications of the law rather than just theory which, has enabled me to make better-rounded, critical arguments in my studies. I am also a group leader of a law study group, where we meet regularly to discuss our independent study and create a reading log and newspaper clipping book for further debate.

My choices of A-Level subjects, aside from law, are English Literature and Spanish. I enjoy facing challenges from all three of these subjects and the skills they require are all relevant to the study of law. English literature demands good writing, analytical and research skills. In taking a language I have shown a commitment to a difficult subject in the belief that the ability to be fluent in Spanish will potentially benefit my career at a later stage. In 2018, I attended a highly beneficial one week placement at Eden Solicitors High Wycombe. This was an eye opening experience which allowed me to explore different types of law such as child conduct, property and asylum. This work experience saw me working with professionals within the sector and enabled me to see firsthand how a law firm operates.

During 2017, I started my first job at Costa. The job helped me improve my team work and communication skills which are highly important in a client facing role. Additionally, I have volunteered at my local primary school from 2013 until 2017. Tasked with jobs such as helping with sports days, presentations and admin work within the office, it has allowed my skill set to improve in areas such as attention to detail, communication skills and creativity: all of which are skills that a lawyer requires.

Fortunately, my school have given me many opportunities to express my ideas and views. Through

being a member of the school council, I have been allowed to voice the suggestions of my peers which has improved my listening and communication skills. I was also a prefect in Year 11 which allowed me to motivate and encourage fellow students and develop my skills as a leader. Since joining sixth form, I have been appointed senior prefect and from this I have become a year 7 mentor; this role allows me to help and advise new students.

Studying at university has been my ambition for many years, as I would be the first generation within my family to complete a degree. Also, I attended a secondary modern school in a selected system which I believe has been a disadvantage. I have always worked very hard for what I have achieved, and I believe this has given me the confidence to strive for what I want out of life especially, within the legal sector.

Personal Statement: Example 4

The complexities of our environment, and how technology can be harnessed to solve problems to reduce that complexity, are of great interest to me. I am intrigued by the use of AI in new technologies and especially in space travel. For example, Space X's development of a personal assistant that provides technical support to astronauts (CIMON), and the AI within their self-landing liquid fuel boosters designed for reuse and commercial space travel.

I would like to pursue a career in Computer Science in order to explore further the design and application of computer systems and artificial intelligence to support, replace and enhance human activity in everyday life.

A-level Maths has given me the problem solving and logical mind-set which I believe will be crucial to studying at university. Studying Physics has given me the opportunity to explore new and challenging ideas and concepts, increased my analytical skills and has helped me understand how a science discipline relates to the real world and our daily lives. Studying Computing has built on this and given me a new perspective from which to see and understand how broader systems can be enhanced and adapted through the use of new technologies.

My desire to pursue a Computer Science degree and my understanding of the practicalities of applying computer theory were reinforced when I installed a computer network in my home and built my own PC which gave me an insight into the trade-off between cost and performance. As a keen sportsman, I have been able to demonstrate teamwork skills and an unrelenting commitment to achieving my goals and those of the team under pressure. I have played both rugby and hockey for Marlow, and I have rowed at various regattas and heads of the river including National Schools, gaining school colours in the process.

I have an open mind-set and readily take on new experiences, ideas and responsibilities. I was a prefect at school, have participated in an international scout camp in Switzerland, and over the Summer I worked at an outdoor activity centre where I helped lead outdoor activities and worked with younger children. Each has broadened my range of experiences and helped me to improve my communication skills and become more confident, independent and resilient.

As an active PADI Rescue Diver and an emergency First Responder I have first aid training and am able to plan and lead dives. This has allowed me to improve my leadership and communication skills under pressure and develop the ability to think fast and find the best outcomes quickly.

I look forward to the opportunity to research modules such as: computing theory, systems applications, computer engineering, software engineering and artificial intelligence at degree level.

Computing and how it can be applied to the human system and new discoveries really excite me. With my enthusiasm and drive to succeed, I believe that this course will help me fulfil my ambition to pursue a career in Computer Science.

Personal Statement: Example 5

I have found that literature, as a device of communication, serves as a conduit for conveying a writer's emotions and sensitivities upon a reader or audience. When a writer's subject matter is controversial, the message can transcend the time of production to resonate with later readers or audiences, which is fascinating. At university, I look forward to broadening my knowledge and understanding of literary voices whose writing has escaped the parameters and conventions of their time; and whose works still serve to inspire and resonate. Studying Shakespeare at A-level has challenged me to consider the importance of his work over time. Take Shakespeare's Othello: by crafting such a finale, in which the female protagonists are punished for challenging the status quo, Shakespeare keeps the censors on side, but his women's confrontation of patriarchal dominance is prevalent today. This ties in with my participation in the feminist society at school, which has heightened my awareness of alternative interpretations, while my independent interest in the life and works of Aphra Behn, especially her poetry, has been of particular interest to my feminist stance since listening to the BBC podcast "In Our Time".

Following a Creative Writing Programme in Venice last October, I have been able to identify the transcendence of other literature such as the poetry of Lord Byron whose "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage" includes the poem, "I Stood in Venice". By visiting Venice and viewing its magnificence for myself, I truly appreciated the creative use of language that Byron commands. Byron acknowledges the effect of time: "music not always now the ear: those days are gone" yet the "glory" of Venice is captured, paraded and honoured in a remarkable way. Furthermore, I found that visiting Venice, with its rich past of decadence and dramatic tragedy, gave a background context to both Othello and my A-level history.

An interest in linguistics, furthered by my French A-level, has extended my understanding of language and has sharpened my analysis skills. Studying a language has led me to be more articulate: of great benefit if speaking in a debate. Being a prominent member of the debate club has been beneficial as it has encouraged me to evaluate contradictory evidence; making me more critically aware.

Since working on my school's website, as their first Sixth Form Correspondent, I have developed a journalistic style of writing. The role has turned me into a small-scale published writer, which has given an insight into the literary choices that are made between draft and publication. This experience, in conjunction with my work experience at The Telegraph newspaper, has whetted a desire for a career in the literary world. The more literature I encounter, the more conscious I am of the plethora of voices utilised by writers. Many speak of having the germination of an idea but finding the best voice to write in takes time. A greater confidence to experiment with voices in drama has been fostered by my participation in performing arts productions; I have particularly enjoyed finding ways to showcase plot and message. My experience of university life, with the National Citizenship Service, gave me further opportunities to explore live productions. Finally, my ability to evaluate literature has been enhanced when mentoring students whose grasp of English literature is less than that of their peers, yet discussions with them has highlighted how writers challenge their readers to think: the best literature, it seems, finds a way to speak to readers of all ability levels. Moreover, volunteering with children with additional needs, at a local sports club, has demonstrated how powerful language is as a communication tool.

To conclude, I look forward critically exploring literature texts at university: it promises to further my passion for this engaging subject and I am truly excited by the prospect.

Personal Statement: Example 6

The human body fascinates me. For many years I have been intrigued by the way in which our bodies work and in particular, the physiological responses to injury.

As a keen sportsman myself, I fully understand the frustration suffering an injury can bring. I take a great interest in the range of musculoskeletal problems sustained; how and why they occur as well as the treatment necessary to return individuals to full fitness. I aspire to be able to diagnose and help individuals recover from such injuries as well as cardiovascular, respiratory, and neurological disorders. Not only would this give me great satisfaction but would be a process I would undertake with passion.

Based upon my enthusiasm for this area, I chose to study Biology, Psychology and Physical Education at A-Level. The range of topics covered across my courses is diverse and include areas from neuronal and hormonal communication in biology to social impact theory of obedience in psychology. I particularly enjoyed a module in PE focusing on sports injury. The detailed study of human anatomy in biology would provide a solid grounding ahead of this course. I would now like to extend my knowledge by studying this degree at university with a view to make physiotherapy my career.

Over the summer, I completed a work experience placement at a private physiotherapy and sport rehabilitation clinic. I enjoyed being able to experience first-hand the treatment required for a range of problems and the interactions between the patient and the physio. By witnessing individuals' satisfaction of recovering from an injury, my ambition to study this as a degree was reinforced. In addition, I held a part-time evening job at The Ivy Marlow Garden restaurant, displaying my ability to work hard, and be committed to a task.

In my spare time, I play rugby both for my local club, Marlow, as well as at Buckinghamshire County level. I was also privileged to be involved in the Wasps Academy development programme for a number of seasons, exposing me to high performing athletes and professional support staff and physios. Through sport, I have developed valuable life skills such as the ability to work effectively with others. I believe this skill is fundamental to the success of a team and is equally necessary in an environment where people's health and wellbeing are important.

In addition to playing rugby, I have also coached younger students at my school for several seasons. This responsibility developed my leadership and communication skills as well as demonstrates my ability to have empathy with, relate to and care for others. My contributions were recognised by the teaching staff when I was awarded the KS4 Sports Leader of the Year award.

I enjoy participating in and watching several other sports too, giving me an extensive understanding of common problems that may occur for participants and the ways in which they may be prevented.

Within school, further to being selected in Year 11 as a prefect, I have this year been appointed the role of Deputy Head Boy. This fantastic position of responsibility requires me to work closely with both members of staff and the senior prefect team. As a role model and mentor, I support younger students through their GCSE choices and other academic issues. I also enjoy taking tours around the school for prospective students, as well as delivering speeches at school events. The position has given me a brilliant opportunity to grow as a person and advance my communication and leadership skills, and I also feel very proud to have been selected. Being chosen shows that I am well respected by members of staff and reveals their belief that I am hardworking, reliable and dedicated.

These personal qualities and my calm and patient manner demonstrate that I am well-suited to this course and field. I have a strong ambition to study this degree to extend my existing knowledge of the diverse areas of physiotherapy, to successfully rehabilitate individuals.

Personal Statement: Example 7

I find the legal system captivating, but it was my parents' experience of having to attend a court hearing regarding my brother's health that served as the catalyst for my desire to study law. The process inspired me to wish to become an advocate, as a solicitor, after gaining a law degree. I am eager to push my personal boundaries and the boundaries of my subject. Recently, I attended a lecture from Ghana's Chief Justice. Two points were particularly fascinating: firstly, it is not healthy for the judiciary to be heavily influenced by politics (the changes to the law in England regarding Brexit are relevant to this point); secondly, the advancement of a less developed country depends on improving the socio-economic conditions, and the law is the foundation for such growth. Certainly, I agree with the sentiment that the law is "dealing with the human condition" - as Professor E Fisher aptly stated at a university tutorial I attended in June, and this cultivates my passion for law. Despite there being a difference between ethics and law, the law is based on the moral values of society.

Work experience at Gordons solicitors granted me the opportunity to draft a Lasting Powers of Attorney and a will. The latter required sorting out the deceased's taxes and shares; the importance of precision in calculating a client's estate became clear from this work. I now understand, more fully, that the law is a process. At EDC Lord & Co I took dictations, amended leases and tracked changes. Specifically, I enjoyed making a supplemental agreement, gaining an insight into how prescribed clauses are important in regard to liability in property leases. At both establishments I undertook proof reading and administrative tasks, making me increasingly familiar with legal documentation such as death certificates, leases, and probate documents.

The law is constantly changing, so listening to programmes like the BBC's 'Law in Action' educates listeners to the wider remit of the law and its complexities. In particular, I enjoy how a variety of people are interviewed- judges as well as victims- in order for a debate to be established, allowing a wider audience to form an opinion from the evidence available. From listening to a podcast about the law and acid attacks I realised that, in regard to acid, it is hard to prosecute. Forbidding acid in public places is unreasonable because cleaners and jewellers use the product in the workplace: the wider ramifications have to be considered before a new law is implemented. This podcast's relevance to recent cases sparked my decision to keep up to date with the law via the news.

My wider reading has included 'Learning the Law' by Glanville Williams and 'Great Debates in Criminal Law': these have given me an insight into aspects of the law I was not hitherto familiar with. My choice of essay based subjects for A-level has allowed me to perfect the art of independent study, self-motivation, evaluating arguments and thinking critically, whilst Chemistry has fostered logical thinking and problem solving skills, which will be invaluable when studying law.

I have realised the importance of being part of a shared community through my fundraising activities and being a senior prefect. I enjoy participating in debate club, discussing issues, digesting different interpretations, and accepting reasoned conclusions. Outside school, as Head Chorister, I am required to show leadership and display reason in adversity.

As a church goer, I have a firm moral standing. I appreciate, however, that morality based on church doctrine may differ to political law. A podcast about how best to hear the evidence of those under 18 brought a critical awareness to a moral dilemma: young people over the legal prosecuting age should be punished, yet is the criminal court or the family court the best. Place to consider all the evidence to reach a judgement? I find the law endlessly captivating, which is why I wish to study it at university.

Personal Statement: Example 8

My inspiration for becoming a children's nurse stems from watching my mother and sister in the same role. I have always loved the thought of being a nurse and caring for patients. I believe child nursing will be an incredibly rewarding career but understand there will be challenges and demands. However, I am confident that I can acquire the skills necessary to ensure that the medical needs of the patient are met and the patients and their families receive the best care.

I studied Child Development at GCSE, which confirmed my interest in caring for children as a future career choice. As part of the course I studied a two-year-old girl with a Cleft Lip and Palate for six months. This involved numerous visits with the child and her family, where I had planned activities specifically designed for the age and stage of the child. One activity involved making our own play-dough, which the little girl really enjoyed. I got to know her as a brave, confident and excitable little girl whom I enjoyed spending time with. I used PIES to evaluate whether her Cleft Lip and Palate affected her development. In July 2018, I completed a work placement at Thames Valley Fertility Clinic where I gained valuable clinical experience. The clinic specialises in IVF and complex fertility treatment. On my first day I was in theatre with the doctor observing him perform fascinating procedures on men and women.

I thoroughly enjoyed it. The manager also allowed me to sit in on consultations, nurse planning, admin work and also talked me through phlebotomy training and blood pressure. I learnt invaluable skills, particularly the importance of client interaction, especially with something as sensitive as fertility. I witnessed the doctors and nurses discuss treatments professionally, yet be reassuring and comforting to clients who were sometimes very distressed. Both experiences demonstrated the importance of several key skills when working with children and delivering care. These include patience, excellent listening skills, being compassionate without becoming emotionally involved and having the tenacity to ensure tasks are completed.

I have experience of interacting with children in my family and through the Child Development course. I recognise the importance of being able to communicate well with children, especially if they are unwell. Poorly children may not be able to communicate verbally so a nurse must have the skills to be able to interpret patients' needs. Through the Child Development course, which included visits from midwives and SCBU nurses, I gained valuable insights into the high level of skills that will be required of me as a children's nurse.

I have worked in retail for two years, gaining a number of useful skills including self-confidence, learning and retaining information about multiple products, dealing with difficult customers and the importance of being part of a team. The team needs to communicate well and be well led and organised. I have had to manage situations where conflict has arisen, and now feel able to deal with this appropriately.

My A-level subjects are English Literature, Geography and Psychology. Studying English has helped develop my analytical skills and improved my vocabulary. Human Geography, in particular, has given me a window on many aspects of human life including diverse cultures and the impact of deprivation. And Psychology has taught me why humans behave and react the way we do. I was also a school prefect and participated in the DoE award scheme (a hugely rewarding experience).

I am very excited to begin this course and develop my skills further on the journey to becoming a caring and competent nurse. I understand that this role will be challenging, and at times hard and upsetting, however I feel there will be many uplifting and happy moments. I feel that I can develop the skills to become someone that patients and their families can trust and rely on in their time of need.

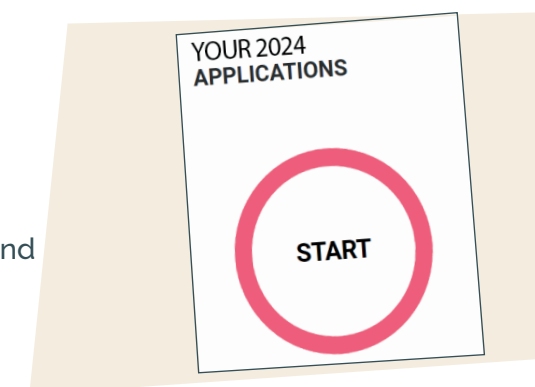
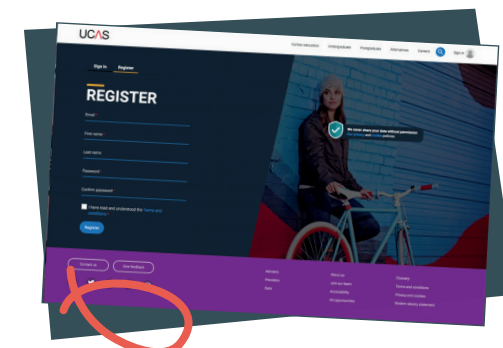
APPLYING TO UCAS FOR 2024

General instructions for getting started

Registration

- access www.ucas.com
- click on **Sign in** at the top right of the page (**go to students in the drop down menu**)
- click on **register**
- Use personal email
- then go to UCAS hub
- enter details
- select **2024 Apply**
- select **undergraduate**
- Fill in information
- read the information carefully before ticking the box **to accept** the terms and conditions.

Click **Register**



APPLYING to UCAS

Answer the initial UCAS questions: in response to 'How are you applying?' Select – **'through my school or college'**

Enter the GMS buzzword: GMS2024

Once it has confirmed the school, you will be asked to select your tutor group.

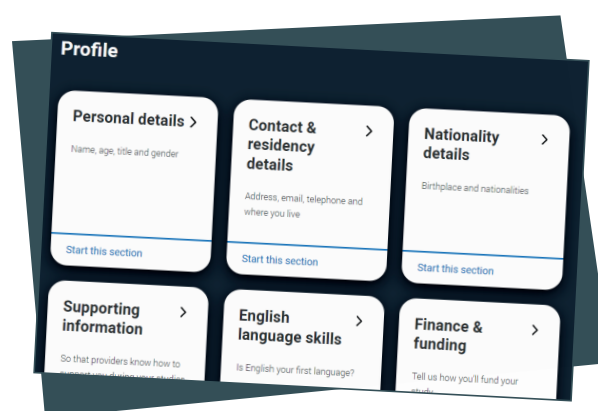
Follow these instructions to continue:

If you wish to leave the form, **click on 'log out'**

You will be able to see your application progress via the hub each time. Fill details in gradually, not in a rush!



You will then complete each section separately and see your progress % increase.



FINANCE and FUNDING

- Select UK student finance services if you intend to apply for a student loan (most of you will).

Once completed

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REQUIRED

- **equality, ethnic origin and national identity**
- **activities undertaken in preparation for higher education – taster courses, summer schools etc. that you have attended**
- **parental education – this is used by the government to ensure that people from all backgrounds are encouraged to go into HE. If you are the first in your family, you may be entitled to more financial help**
- **occupational background – enter one parental occupation**

CHOICES

You have a maximum of 5 choices, but you can apply for less if you wish. There is no order of preference.

- Use dropdown menus to find institution codes, course codes, campus etc.
- Click the intended **entry start date** either **September 2024**, or if you want to **defer**, **September 2025**
- Click 'yes' if you will be living at **home**

EDUCATION

- Choose **'Add new school/college'** and **name your secondary school.**
- Enter qualifications centre as **below honours degree.** Centre number:52435
- Use the help boxes to select correct qualification.
- Select GCSE to enter your GCSE grades (single subject GCSEs).
- Remember to put grades in for all exams taken, enter the correct exam board for each subject and save. Ask your subject teachers if you are unsure.
- If you did Double Science, add qualifications to GCSE Double Award.
- Mark this section as complete.
- Choose 'Add new school/college' enter the name: Great Marlow School
- Add the qualifications yet to be gained there.
- Enter the module/unit title (e.g. GGA3 Geographical Skills) and the achieved grade – this must be completed for all subjects. **Check exact BTEC courses carefully with your teachers.**
- Add in any Key Skills qualifications.
- Add details of other examinations in music or drama, for example.
- Candidates must remember to enter the names of subjects being studied and the date. Leave the results as "pending" – NB unit titles are needed for this section.
- Add in details about Additional Admission Tests if you are taking LNAT, BMAT or UKCAT for instance.
- Point of entry -leave blank

EMPLOYMENT

Enter details of any paid employment – full or part-time.

PERSONAL STATEMENT

Complete your Personal Statement in Word (minimum font size 12). **"Apply" will only use plain type so there is no point in underlining, using bold or italics.**

Use the spell-check to identify any errors and ask your tutor, Head of Sixth Form, or the Deputy Head of Sixth Form to check your statement.

Save it on the school drive, as well as at home.

FINALLY

Copy and paste the finished statement into your "Apply" form, but only when your tutor is satisfied with it and tells you to do so.

CHECKING

- Click on **"View All"**. This will preview all the details entered so far in each section.
- Only send the application to your referee (your tutor) when you are sure you have thoroughly checked that all sections have been completed by you.



...AND THAT IS YOUR APPLICATION COMPLETED!

THIS IS IMPORTANT

You have a maximum of 47 lines. Click save within 35 minutes or you will lose your work! Once you have saved it you can go back to your application at any time.

DEADLINES

Deadline to submit the form to your tutor is:

THURSDAY 19th OCTOBER 2023

- Print out a copy of the application form and keep it safe for reference.
- Proceed to send the form to the referee by paying online by credit/debit card. You will be asked to enter the card details. Make sure you have permission if using a card belonging to parents. £27.50.

Your tutor (referee) will now add their reference and the form will be sent to UCAS.



This process may take up to 20 working days.

Remember – the earlier you complete the whole process, the more likely you are to receive an offer

FINAL DEADLINE for GMS students to complete process:

Friday 8th December 2023

**(EXCEPT OXBRIDGE/MEDICAL CANDIDATES
18th September 2023)**

For more info, go to www.ucas.com/fillinginyourapplication

APPRENTICESHIPS

An apprenticeship is a real job, consisting of a combined package of work and study, which will enable you to complete a relevant professional qualification whilst learning in the workplace.

WHAT IS AN APPRENTICESHIP?

MAKING THE BEST CHOICE FOR YOU!

EARN WHILE YOU
LEARN. FROM
ENGINEERING
TO ACCOUNTING,
CATERING TO
TEACHING.

An apprenticeship is a real job, consisting of a combined package of work and study, which will enable you to complete a relevant professional qualification whilst learning in the workplace. You'll be employed by a company from day one with a Contract of Employment: working a minimum of 30 hours a week, you will rights and responsibilities including paid holiday.

All apprenticeships last minimum of twelve months.

Typically you will have one day a week dedicated to learning and study.

What levels are there?

Name	Level	Equivalent educational level
Intermediate	2	5 GCSE passes at grades A* to C
Advanced	3	2 A level passes
Higher	4,5,6 and 7	Foundation degree and above

Apprenticeships are available at intermediate, advanced, higher and degree level:

There are no set entry requirements: these vary from programme to programme, depending on the sector, level of programme

and the occupational areas. Usually employers will looking be a combination of academic qualifications, skills, attributes and personal qualities, hence it's very important to research the apprenticeship you're interested in to see exactly what's needed.

What apprenticeships are most relevant when I finish Sixth Form?

Currently there are apprenticeships offered in over 170 industries with 280 different types. After sixth form, students are most likely to be suited to higher or degree apprenticeships but there are no restrictions should you decide to apply for an Intermediate or Advanced Apprenticeship in an occupational field unrelated to you're A-level or BTEC studies.

Degree apprenticeships are a growing area. Big companies like Rolls Royce, GlaxoSmithKline, Goldman Sachs and BAE Systems offer degree apprenticeships, but you'll also find smaller companies offering them.

How do I apply for apprenticeship?

Unlike applying to university, there is no streamlined application process or fixed deadline when it comes to Apprenticeships, so you need to be prepared to start your research early and invest considerable time. Vacancies appear throughout the year, so it is worth registering for alerts on a number of websites (www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship being the core one) to hear about vacancies as they appear.

WHAT DO APPRENTICES GET PAID?

The government each year specifies a minimum wage that employers must pay their apprentices. This rate applies to Apprentices aged 16 to 18 and those aged 19 or over who are in their first year. The 2023 rate is £5.28 per hour.

Although it varies between sectors, many large employers will pay considerably higher : In 2021, the average salary for Higher Apprentices was £26,964 (Source: 'Rate my Apprenticeship')

HOW DO I KNOW IF I AM SUITED TO TAKING A HIGHER OR DEGREE APPRENTICESHIP?

Whilst Apprenticeships can be an attractive alternative to Higher Education, there are a number of things to consider at the research stage:

- Do you clearly have a particular interest in the area of work you're applying for? Most importantly, can demonstrate this from previous experience, whether it be volunteering, work experience or contributions in school?
- You'll be starting a challenging job and establishing yourself in the workplace, whilst commencing studies for a professional qualification or degree.
- You will be expected to achieve academically and at work, working full-time hours with fewer holidays than friends who are at university.
- Length of the programme; sometimes a Higher Apprenticeship can lead onto a Degree but this may not be guaranteed. Do you know what you are committing yourself to? A degree programme will usually last between 3 to 6 years study.

Top tips for applications

- Big companies may offer 'Insight' or 'Experience' days to tell you about their company culture and sector which are invaluable preparation prior to making a job application
- As a general rule, larger companies plan one year ahead and so will effectively mirror the UCAS cycle i.e. initial contacts will start to be made in the summer with vacancies appearing in the autumn, but the majority pop up from January or February onwards.
- Smaller businesses may start recruiting only a month or two before the job starts, so if you hope to start work in September, you should start looking from Easter onwards. Do check start dates closely, to make sure you'll have finished school.
- Don't wait until the deadline to make an application, some companies close their recruitment process as soon as they have sufficient candidates.

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT FROM THE SELECTION PROCESS?

There are usually a number of hurdles or stages to get through so that the employer can assess whether you have the relevant skills and qualities they are looking for. Typically, you may have to complete an application form, online tests, perhaps a phone or online interview, before being invited to an Assessment Day. This will include individual and group tasks, possibly psychometric tests and definitely either a one to one or panel interview. Smaller organisations tend to have a less complex and more personal process.

FURTHER HELP

To support you in developing the necessary skills and techniques to succeed in these rigorous selection processes, GMS runs workshops in collaboration with employers to prepare students. To register your interest for forthcoming events please contact **Mrs Gill Southon Careers Lead**.

Be aware that many apprenticeship schemes may require you to have good passes in GCSE Maths and English. Depending on these grades, you may or may not have to take some literacy and numeracy tests.

Useful websites

www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship.co.uk

www.ratemyapprenticeship.co.uk

www.apprenticeshipguide.co.uk

www.notgoingtouni.co.uk

www.careersworld.co.uk/south-east/home

www.future-talent.com

www.thebigchoice.com

Many of the job search websites are also extremely useful.



JOBS & CV's

If you are certain that you do not want to apply to HE through UCAS, then this section will help you think about what sort of job you may wish to apply for.

OTHER CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

THOSE APPLYING THROUGH UCAS MAY ALSO FIND THIS SECTION USEFUL.

IF YOU ARE CERTAIN THAT YOU DO NOT WANT TO APPLY TO HE THROUGH UCAS, THEN THIS SECTION WILL HELP YOU DECIDE.

We will be looking at:

- CV – what is it, writing it
- Personal information and skills
- What to include
- Matching your data to the job
- Example CVs
- Interview techniques

Writing a good CV

When applying for a job you will be required to send in a CV and/or covering letter.

Follow these simple tips to ensure that your CV stands out from all the other applicants.

TOP FIVE CV TIPS

Your CV is your personal brochure, giving you a chance to show off all the attributes that make you the perfect choice for employers. These tips inform you of the key things you need to consider to ensure your CV shows you in the best light.

1 Show what makes you unique.

For every job you apply for you could be up against hundreds of other candidates. It is important to ensure

your CV stands out. Employers don't just buy skills; they buy solutions, so research the place offering employment. Perhaps, show how can you make the company money or how can you solve the problems that they have.

2 Choose a clear layout.

Employers spend around 20 to 30 seconds scanning a CV so it needs to remain clutter-free and easy to read. The last thing a recruiter wants to do is hunt for the information that they are looking for, so don't hide it amongst an array of elaborate graphics.

3 Tailor your CV to your audience.

It may sound like a time consuming process, but make the effort to tailor your CV to suit the requirements of each particular job that you apply for: it can greatly increase your chances of securing an interview.

4 Keep the CV error free.

It's deceptively easy to make mistakes on your CV and exceptionally difficult to repair the damage once an employer has it. As well as checking your spelling and grammar, make sure your employment dates match up and that you've provided the right phone number and email address.

5 Keep your CV up-to-date.

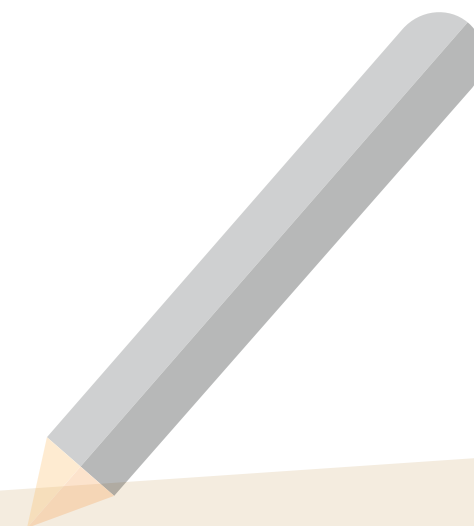
When you put together a CV it is often difficult to remember the projects you have been involved in and the achievements you have made. To avoid missing important pieces of information, revisit your CV every month adding anything of importance, and cutting out any information that is no longer required.

WHAT TO INCLUDE ON A CV

There is no set format. How you present your CV is up to you. However, you should include, at the very least, the following:

- your name
- your address
- your phone number
- your email address (if you have one)
- your career history

is
o
d



Put your most recent job first and include dates. Employers will be more interested in what you have done recently. Don't leave any gap between occupations, because employers will want to know what you did during those periods.

If you don't have much work experience, you could include temporary, holiday, part-time or voluntary jobs. If you've had many different jobs, emphasise the skills and experience you have acquired, for example, dealing with customers or communication skills.

The following gives ideas about what to include:

PERSONAL PROFILE

This is a short statement at the beginning of your CV to sell yourself, to show off the skills, experience and personal qualities you have. You could include positive words such as 'competent', 'adaptable', and 'conscientious'.

Tailor the statement to the requirements of the job being applied for. Make it clear to the employer that you're the right person for the job.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Ensure you write about the achievements of your previous jobs; what you did well and how the skills acquired are relevant to the job you are applying for.

QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING

Include any qualifications and training acquired from previous jobs (for example, training in health and safety or a certificate in food hygiene). Put the most recent first, and include the qualifications you achieved at school or college.

INTERESTS

These can support your application if your hobbies and leisure activities highlight responsibilities and skills that are relevant to the job you're applying for. Perhaps, you have organised activities for a club or society. Perhaps, you have developed leadership skills or teamwork skills from being a key member of the organisation.

OTHER INFORMATION

It is an individual's choice whether to include extra information. It is helpful to do so if there are gaps in your CV. If you had a career break because you were caring for children or elderly relatives, make this a positive experience. Think about the skills you acquired. If the job you're applying for is different from what you've done in the past, explain why you're interested in the new type of work.

DID YOU
KNOW

You don't need to include your date of birth.

Laws on age discrimination mean that you **do not need to put your date of birth, or your age, on your CV.**

Ask a friend or relative to read through your CV, to make sure it's accurate and shows off the skills you have in a positive way.

REFERENCES

It is best to have two or more people who can provide a work or personal reference. Ideally, one should be your most recent employer. If you have not worked for a while it could be someone who has known you for a long time. It should be someone who can comment on your qualities in relation to the job. You should ask the person to agree to this beforehand.

THIS
DOES

What do
recruiters
dislike seeing
on a CV?

The Internet has changed the focus of a job search and just because your CV looks nice on paper, it doesn't mean it's nice on a computer.

With stacks of CVs arriving in hiring managers' inboxes every day they, very quickly, grow to loath some of the things they see. If you don't want your CV to be discarded, take heed to avoid the following:

- **Spelling errors and poor grammar** – it is important to write correctly: you lose so much when it is wrong. Check every word, then double check it. Before you send it off, check it again. Read your CV out loud to uncover any grammatical discrepancies.
- **Too duty-oriented** – if you find yourself copying the job description into your CV, you are missing the point. Recruiters already know what the job is; your CV should highlight what you've achieved and what you can offer to the job being advertised.
- **Inaccurate dates** – recruiters need to know where you worked and when, because they want to understand your working history; they use the dates to run background checks. Missing dates, especially for long periods of time, could send up a red flag. Include specific ranges in months and years for every position. If you have gaps, explain them in the CV or in an accompanying cover letter.
- **Inaccurate contact information** – a CV is created for one reason, to get a response. How can someone contact you if the phone number is missing a digit or your email address is incorrect? Recruiters will not look you up; they'll move on to the next candidate.
- **Poor formatting** – different typefaces and boxes may look nice on paper, but as your CV goes through various email formats and IT packages, it can get distorted. If you want everyone to see your CV in the same format, keep it in plain text.
- **Long paragraphs** – employers generally don't have the time to read them. Focus on the skills and accomplishments that directly apply to the job you are applying for. Use snappy bullet points because every word counts. Avoid dwelling on the specifics of each job; instead highlight specific points that will help the recruiter to select you for interview.
- **Unqualified candidates** – you may want the job, but if you do not show you have the skills and experience required, recruiters will feel you are wasting their time. If you think you have the skills and expertise required, make sure you make it obvious by drawing attention to how your qualifications match key points in the job description and write them at the top of the document.

- **Information unrelated to the job** - recruiters spend limited time on each CV, therefore, it is important not to distract them with details of age, height, weight and interests unless they are directly related to the work being applied for. Spend time making a link between what a recruiter needs and what you bring to the table. The hobbies and interests section is valid, but don't let it dominate.

The length of a good CV

You are not writing an autobiography. It is a Curriculum Vitae and it's meant to be an overview! A one-page CV, if it is feasible, is recommended. Some recruitment agencies, especially head-hunters, may insist on a one-page CV.

Failing that, two pages are entirely acceptable. In certain circumstances, it may be acceptable for a CV to run to three pages, for example, a medical CV would need to document multiple qualifications and experience so show academic and clinical experience.

Some believe that a one-page CV is worth less than two-pages, but this is definitely not true. It is much better to have a good, strong one-page CV than two-pages that are padded out with

unnecessary information. Aim to exclude irrelevant information, which may detract the reader from other, more important, points.

Often a CV, which has been spread out over two pages can, with a little careful tweaking, be made to fit onto one page – and this tends to have greater impact. It is, of course, important not to force a CV unnecessarily onto one page when two pages would be better but a 1½ page CV tends to look incomplete and weak.

Summary: if a finished CV is longer than two pages it is important to keep working on it until it has been reduced it to the standard two pages. The only exception to this rule is the special case outlined above.

If the CV requires to be shortened consider:

- removing some of the less important points you've made
- finding ways to communicate the same points more concisely
- ruthlessly eliminating all unnecessary words and phrases
- axing non-essential sections, for example your Objectives
- placing your interests and activities under Other Details
- changing the design and page layout to create more space
- editing, rewriting, polishing and perfecting until it fits

Regardless of the length, do make sure that all the most important information is conveyed on the first page or, for a one-page CV, in the top half of the page: sadly, too many recruiters simply do not bother to look any further.

COVERING LETTERS

INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED IN A COVER LETTER

In the days when all applications were sent by post, the cover letter was the first chance you had to 'wow' a prospective employer. Now, the process is largely electronic based, but nothing has really changed.

Whether you're emailing your application or submitting it through a job search web account, you have the chance to write a few choice words that will entice your reader to take a detailed look through your CV.

At the beginning

Address your reader – if you know their name always put "Dear Mr Bloggs" rather than "Dear Joe" as over-familiarity at this early stage might suggest an unprofessional attitude.

The first sentence should clearly state your intention to apply for the job. Recruiters are often covering many vacancies at one time and may be confused as to which applicant is applying for which job. Include any reference numbers provided to make the task easy for them.

Reference how your aptitude will enable you to do the job successfully. But remember, your cover letter is not your autobiography – the main bulk of your experience and abilities should be listed on your CV. The focus of a cover letter is to highlight how you meet an employer's needs: avoid the perception of being self-important.

From the advertisement, pick the main responsibility the recruiter is looking for in the role and give an example of how and why you are the person for the job. "My experience of managing Network Support Engineers will help to ensure the smooth running of your computer systems to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of your business." This is an example of a skill that can be transferred to a new role.

Watch the length

Two short paragraphs may be all that's needed to sell yourself. You should to be as punchy as possible, as your reader will probably be a very busy person with limited time to trawl through a long letter. Concise and compelling is the way forward.

You may want to include a 'next step' for your reader, such as "To see how I could take your marketing to the next level, look at my CV to see the achievements I have had during my time with ABC Widgets." This clearly points the employer to the part of your CV you think will persuade them to give you the job.

If you're applying to a number of similar positions, the chances are you're tweaking one letter and using it for multiple openings. That's fine, as long as you are customising each one. Don't forget to update the company, job and contact information - if Mr. Jones is addressed as Mrs. Smith, your application will go straight into the bin.

Be sure to include your contact details so they can contact you when they need to. This information should also be on your CV, but there's no harm doubling up.

OTHER COVERING LETTER ADVICE

Length - A covering letter should, ideally, be no longer than one side of A4.

Format - Your letter should be laid out using a business format – if you're not sure how to do this, take a look at the last "official" letter you received! Letters that are aligned to the left-hand margin and with open punctuation are easy to put together but this is not the only way to do it. Using indents and full punctuation can look effective too.

Typed - Most recruiters prefer a clear, well-typed letter. However, the letter could be hand-written if your handwriting is very clear and legible.

Spelling - If you are typing a covering letter, make sure you set the computer to the English spell-checker. Ask a friend to read the letter to make sure what you have written makes sense.

Paper - Covering letters are usually photocopied so it is best to use A4 paper. Do not staple the CV to the back of the letter – use a new paperclip instead. Use the same type of paper for your covering letter as your CV – it looks more professional.

Dear...? - Ideally, the letter should be addressed to a person rather than "Sir/Madam". If you only know the person's job title, call the office and ask for their full name – they may be impressed that you took the trouble to find out!

If you begin with **Dear Mr Smith**, end with **Yours sincerely**,

If you begin with **Dear Sir/Madam**, end with **Yours faithfully**,

Don't forget to tell the employer:

- who you are
- what you are applying for and where you saw it advertised
- why you want the job and why you are attracted to the organisation
- how your qualifications and experience make you suitable

HOW TO START AND END YOUR LETTER

Some people struggle when it comes to the right words to start and finish a covering letter. What is important is that you sound polite, interested and enthusiastic.

You could start with any of the following lines:

- I am writing with regard to ...
- Please find enclosed ...
- Having recently attended ...

The way you finish your letter is like a written handshake. You need to be positive and express the hope that you will be given the opportunity to meet the recipient.

- Thanking you in anticipation ...
- I look forward to hearing from you ...
- If you require any further information, do not hesitate to contact me.
- I look forward to meeting you to discuss my skills and the post in more detail.
- I believe that my experience to date has allowed me to develop my skills to a level that would meet the demands of this position.



HAYS RECRUITMENT AGENCY ADVICE

A CV is the first thing that a potential employer sees that gives them an indication as to whether you may be suitable for their vacancy. It will determine whether they wish to see you for an interview. It is a document that you will need to keep up to date and refer to over your entire working life, which could be over 50 years!

Remember
A CV is
for life
yours is
unique to
you

CV ADVICE

Most people tend not to like writing about themselves. Some people find it difficult to "sell" themselves in print, while others go the other way and are tempted to oversell themselves, in doing so run the risk of being caught out at the interview with their lies/ bending of the truth!

Use the following tips as a guide:

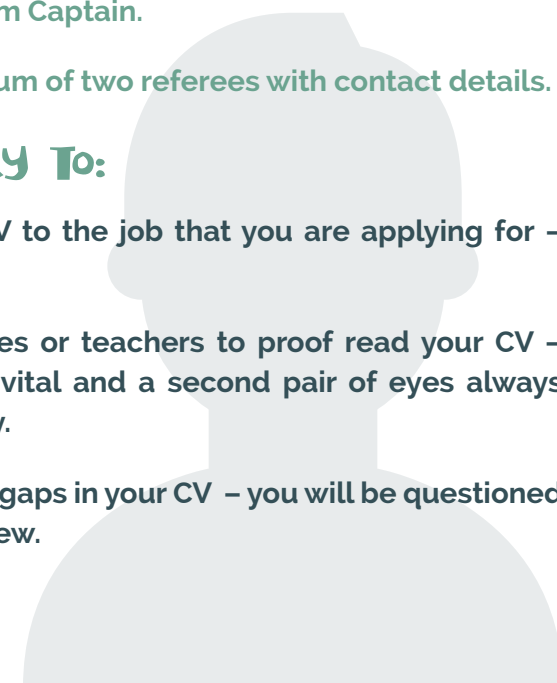
- use good quality white paper with a plain type face – forget italics and decorative fonts
- do not demonstrate your graphics skills by adding an ornate border or any other graphics
- try to keep your CV to no more than 2 pages

CV STRUCTURE:

- Put your name right at the top of the front page, with your contact details directly underneath.
- The structure of the CV should be clear and easy to understand.
- Education history, academic achievements, work experience (paid or voluntary) should be listed with the most recent first.
- Leave your hobbies and interests until last – highlight your achievements eg Team Captain.
- Finally, list a minimum of two referees with contact details.

YOU SHOULD TRY TO:

- Personalise your CV to the job that you are applying for – make it relevant.
- Ask friends, relatives or teachers to proof read your CV – attention to detail is vital and a second pair of eyes always sees things differently.
- Try to have no date gaps in your CV – you will be questioned on them at the interview.



HOW DO EMPLOYERS INTERPRET THE INFORMATION YOU GIVE THEM?

Activity undertaken	What does this demonstrate?
Assisting family members (disabled, elderly) Looking after younger children for family/friends	That you can be given various levels of responsibility, you are reliable and trustworthy
Sports and Leisure	Demonstrates your ability to work as a team or as an individual. That you are competitive, able to think on your feet, fit and healthy
Voluntary work/ mentoring, meeting and greeting, showing visitors around the school	Demonstrates that you are prepared to give your own time to help others in order to gain experience and skills
100% attendance	Demonstrates that you are punctual, reliable, healthy and that you are unlikely to have time off work due to illness



TRY THIS TASK

Andrew's Work Experience Placement

"I undertook a work experience placement at Hays Education in Birmingham between 2nd and 13th July 2019. Hays Education is a large recruitment company who specialise in placing teachers in schools for anything from 1 day's supply cover to permanent jobs. My main tasks were: answering the phones; printing and mailing out information to schools; using the computer system to find addresses and school details; photocopying; tea-making; sending out reference requests; typing CVs; scanning documents such as passports onto the computer system; and welcoming visitors. I also experienced sitting in on an interview, which was valuable experience as I was able to pick up interview tips. The consultant asked me to take notes and we compared our ideas at the end."

Condense the information on the left into 5 bullet points or less.

-
-
-
-
-

MATCHING YOUR DATA TO THE JOB

Before you start writing your CV, you need to match your skills, qualifications and experiences to the actual job you are targeting. Jot down the key features of the job you are applying for and try to match those to your most relevant qualifications and experiences. Ask your tutor to check your notes.

The job – what they want	You – what you can offer
Qualifications needed	Qualifications you have
Skills needed	Your matching skills and how, when and where you achieved them
Experience needed	Matching experience and how you achieved it
Personal qualities needed	Your personal qualities
Other – age, location, physical requirements	Other ways in which you match

CV EXAMPLE

This is an example from Hays Recruitment Agency

Name:	Thomas Jones
Address:	21 New Street Leicester LE2 4NL
Phone no:	0116 2487977/ 07878 248777
Email address:	Thomas.jones@aol.com

Keys Skills:

Communication:	Experience of dealing with people on the telephone. Good at writing reports and essays. Ability to follow instructions from teachers.
Application of a number:	Good at doing calculations. Received an award for maths in Year 11.
Information Technology:	Won an award for designing a logo on the computer for school yearbook.
Improving own learning:	Ability to set learning targets and complete tasks. Have already planned revision timetables for exam periods.
Working with others:	Like to be involved with group project work and enjoy taking the initiative to organise the team. Took part in Young Enterprise Scheme. Play competitive football.
Problem solving:	Always complete course work to deadlines and enjoy researching information.

Academic History:

College/ School	Great Marlow School	
Qualifications	10 GCSEs – including Maths & English	August 2018
	A levels – Maths, ICT, Law etc.	To be completed August 2020

Professional/ Work Experience History:

Date:	Dreams plc – Administration Assistant
October 2016 (2 weeks work experience)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working in an office environment Answering telephone calls Data input Faxing and filing
September 2016 - present	John Lewis plc – Sales Assistant
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greeting customers Till management Dealing with large sums of money Customer service

Achievements & Awards:

100% attendance throughout Years 7, 8, 10, 11 & 12.
Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award – June 2018
National Rowing Championship finalists 2019

Hobbies and Interests:

In my spare time I play football for a local team for which I am currently team captain. We play competitive games every Saturday and train twice a week. I also enjoy travelling and spending time with my family.

References:

Mr O Hollyman Head of Sixth Form Great Marlow School Marlow, Bucks, SL7 1JE Tel: 01628 483752 Email: ohollyman@gms.bucks.sch.uk	A second reference could be one of the following: form tutor, subject teacher, deputy head of sixth form.
--	---

If you are fortunate enough to be called for an interview it is crucial that you are well-prepared.

The critical first five minutes!

Many applicants for jobs of all kinds are rejected in the first five minutes of interview. This is when potential employers form their first opinions of you.

Your written application will, presumably, have fitted the requirements of the organisation because you have been offered an interview. Next, the employer meets you; he or she will assess your physical appearance, speech and behaviour, to complete the picture.

It is crucial, therefore, that you understand that as soon as you walk through the door, you are being judged by everyone, from the receptionist you have first contact with, to those involved in the interview. There should be nothing in your appearance or behaviour to cause disappointment. The best initial approach is to smile.

OTHER TIPS:

- Make sure you are dressed appropriately, preferably in suit attire.
- Do not arrive smelling of smoke.
- Move to shake hands with people upon being introduced to them.
- Do not sit down until invited to do so.
- Sit upright with your hands resting on your knees.
- Do not arrive chewing gum.

OBTAINING INFORMATION

The interview is held to give and obtain information: it is a two-sided opportunity. One of the main objectives, for you, is to obtain information regarding the job and the organisation itself. You will probably be invited to ask questions at the end of the interview. Never accept a job until you are satisfied that it is the one you want.

INTERVIEW CHECKLIST



Before the interview:

- check the time, date and travel arrangements/ timetables
- research the company
- read back through your CV and covering letter
- rehearse questions and answers with family or friends
- plan what you are going to wear
- think positively about why the job appeals to you

At the interview:

- Shake hands firmly and confidently and engage using eye contact.
- Wait to be invited to sit down.
- Adopt a relaxed but formal posture.
- Answer questions confidently, clearly and honestly.
- Ask for clarification if you do not understand a question.
- Be enthusiastic about the job and the company.
- Maintain a professional image throughout.



DO NOT:

- be late!
- swear or smoke
- be over familiar or overconfident
- criticise your last employer
- interrupt the interviewer

GOOD LUCK!

After the interview:

- Write down the questions you were asked in case they come up in future interviews.
- Review the answers you gave, if you can remember them!
- If you do not hear back from the employer, telephone asking for feedback.

USEFUL JOB SEARCH WEBSITES

www.connexions-direct.com/jobs4u - job database: jobs, pay and entry routes

www.kudos.cascaid.co.uk - complete your own job search profile

www.neuvoo.co.uk

www.e4s.co.uk (employment for students) part-time job vacancies

www.alec.co.uk - useful tips on writing CVs, job applications and attending interviews

www.apprenticeships.org.uk/ - apprenticeship information

www.monster.co.uk - UK wide job search site - search by region and job title

**Hundreds of websites have specific careers information and job vacancies.
Here are a few that some students have found useful.**

www.cityjobs.com - useful job hunting site covering accountancy, banking & finance, IT, insurance, media, marketing and legal professions

www.allthetopbananas.com - job search and upload your CV for free

www.ingeniuty.org.uk - excellent site, introducing a wide range of engineering careers

www.ttctraining.co.uk - the Travel Training Company website for those interested in 'Travel and Tourism'

www.cw360.com - computer weekly, an on-line magazine with IT vacancies

www.nhscareers.nhs.uk - careers information and job vacancies in the NHS

www.skillset.org - creative media industry - explains the competition for jobs, the various industry sectors, skills shortage areas and websites to consult

www.uksport.gov.uk - excellent job vacancy information within the Inside UK Sport page

www.need2know.co.uk/wprk - comprehensive site with career or job advice, interview/CV help, self-employment

www.princes-trust.org.uk - employment help for young people

www.redgoldfish.co.uk - excellent site covering wide range of jobs and career advice, CVs

www.jobsite.co.uk - Send your CV to recruitment agencies

www.myjobsearch.com - job search engine

**Please let the Sixth Form Team Know if you discover any
other useful websites.**

USEFUL CV WEBSITES

www.cvtemplate.co.uk

www.reed.co.uk - CV builder

www.monster.co.uk - CV advice and construction

www.gov.uk

www.kent.ac.uk/careers/cv - see example CVs

www.mycvbuilder.com

www.prospects.ac.uk

GAP YEAR

Some students choose to take a gap year in order to reflect on the benefits of each of the choices available: employment, further education or university

TAKING A GAP YEAR

WHAT ARE YOUR OPTIONS?

SOME STUDENTS APPLY FOR UCAS BUT REQUEST A DEFERRED ENTRY BECAUSE THEY WANT TO TRAVEL OR PERHAPS EARN SOME MONEY BEFORE GOING TO UNIVERSITY.

Some students apply for UCAS but request a deferred entry. This means the UCAS application form is filled in this year, students receive offers, but the place is not taken up until September 2022. A student opting for this has to be sure this is their preferred start date because it cannot be brought forward to September 2021.

Some students choose to take a gap year in order to reflect on the benefits of each of the choices available: employment, further education or university. Should a student opt for university an application to UCAS is required. This can be achieved individually, through an employer, or through school. If the latter course is the chosen one, it is important to contact a former A2 tutor and/or the Head of Sixth Form to alert them to the fact that an application is going to be submitted. A student choosing this route is likely to receive unconditional offers, as they will already have their A-level grades 'in the bag'.

Students intending to take a gap year must ensure they spend time doing something beneficial. The importance of this is made clear: no university, or potential employer, will be interested in someone who has simply done nothing for a year.

Students intending to travel should research the places to be visited. Find out all that you can from travel agents and companies. Many organisations offer a range of activities abroad, but check them out thoroughly to ensure they are reputable: it is important to buy a quality experience.

Students should check that their option of work or travel offers a qualification at the end of the experience; this will 'look good' on a CV, as well as offering proof that the activity was undertaken.

Some students opt to volunteer, that way they help people who really need support, help and guidance.

WHY CHOOSE A GAP YEAR?

A gap year enables a student to experience life.

Taking time out to volunteer overseas provides a rare opportunity to do something completely different. It is a springboard for discovering yourself and the world. It might even help you plan for your future, opening your mind to new possibilities.

A gap year enables a student to have an adventure.

Going on a volunteer placement is a real challenge. You will live and work in a different culture, and experience life from another perspective in a way that a tourist never can. You will have time to travel, but your volunteer work comes first.

A gap year enables a student to make new friends.

You are guaranteed to meet like-minded people on a placement. Some will be fellow volunteers; some will be colleagues, students or members of the community. Many will become friends for life.

A gap year enables a student to practise a language.

The best way to improve your foreign language skills is to spend time in a foreign country. Volunteering abroad is an ideal way to improve any language skill you may already have, or even learn a new one. You never know when they may come in handy!

A gap year enables a student to experience another culture.

When simply travelling between countries you rarely have time to learn about different ways of life. By spending several months living and working overseas, you can really experience and immerse yourself in the culture of your chosen country. Many volunteers feel homesick for their placement country, on their return home. It's called Reverse Culture Shock and proves just how fully they were immersed in their new country while volunteering.

A gap year enables a student to enhance their CV.

Getting into university or finding a new job can sometimes be hard work. Having a volunteer placement on your CV can make all the difference, particularly when you can explain the impact that your volunteering had on your own personal development, as well as the benefits you brought to your host community.

DISCUSS YOUR PLANS

If you are really serious about taking a gap year, please talk to your tutor, and most importantly – your parents!

Below are some useful websites to start the process.

www.gap-year.com – information on work and travel opportunities

www.gogapyear.com – Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice

www.realgap.co.uk – work and volunteer worldwide

www.frontier.ac.uk – worldwide conservation projects

www.thinkpacific.com – marine conservation or community projects

www.statravel.co.uk – worldwide opportunities for work and travel – branches are available all over London and in Reading, should you wish to visit them for an advisory chat

www.igapyear.com – various

www.campsinternational.com – gap year opportunities for 18-25 year olds

www.latitude.org.uk – an international youth development charity offering volunteering and gap year placements for under 25s

www.yearoutgroup.org – gives gap year information: providers of high quality year-out programmes are listed

www.gapadvice.org – offers comprehensive, independent information about having a gap year

REWARDING

LIFE
ENHANCING

LIFETIME
EXPERIENCES

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What date do I have to apply by?

31st January 2024 (with the exception of Oxford, Cambridge, medicine, dentistry, veterinary science and law courses requiring LNAT – 16th October 2023).

Is UCAS the only application route? Usually, yes. However, Art Foundation degrees are applied for separately with a portfolio submitted to the institution you wish to attend. Some courses also require extra tests which you will need to organise yourself. LNAT – Law, MCAT – Medicine.

How do I choose the best university/course for me?

Go onto UCAS and do a course search. Consider course content, entry requirements, location and visit the university!

What's the buzzword?

GMS2024.

What's the fee code?

02.

How much does it cost to apply?

£27.50 for 5 choices.

Why should I apply for 5 choices, instead of one?

This allows you a wider range of choice. With 5 choices you can apply for a couple with higher grades, and perhaps some requiring slightly lower grades. This allows aspirational choices, along with options should you not perform as well as you would hope.

What does defer mean?

When you are accepted onto a course, but wish to start it a year later. Your place is secure. You may only do this once. Be certain with this when you apply, as you will not be able to change your mind!

What does joint honours mean?

You will be studying 2 different subjects i.e. Law with French.

Can I write more than one personal statement if I'm applying for two different subjects/courses?

No. You should avoid applying for totally different courses, as you

may only submit one final version of your personal your personal statement.

Who completes my reference?

Your form tutor, with some collated references from your subject teachers. They will add information about your character, attendance etc.

Who decides my predicted grades?

Your subject teachers. These will be based on your performance throughout Year 12 and will always be a 'best case scenario' grade.

What if my predicted grades are too low for the courses I want to apply for?

You should be realistic about your course choices. You will know the current grades your teachers have said you are working at and should select courses which match these. We will be positive but not over-inflate these predicted grades.

What if all of my choices reject me?

See a member of the 6th Form Team – you can go through UCAS Extra or UCAS Clearing. All is not lost!

What do I do once I have heard back from all 5 of my universities?

You will need to consider their offers carefully, and check that they correspond with your progress grades. By the end of May (the sooner the better), you will need to log back in to your UCAS and select your Firm Choice (the one you really want to go to) and your Insurance Choice (the one you will go to if you don't get the grades for the Firm Choice). It would be wise for your Insurance Choice to have lower grade requirements, where possible.

What does Russell Group mean?

This is a group of the top 24 universities in the country. They are often renowned for their world-class research in a particular field. Grade requirements for these universities may often be higher and places competitive.

Why do some universities ask for grades and some ask for points?

The universities decide themselves which they ask for, but the more traditional universities, such as those in the Russell Group, will typically ask for grades only.

Do I get free sandwiches if I do a sandwich degree? ;)

