



CATERHAM
SCHOOL

Higher Education Guide

2019 Entry



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Higher Education Guide 2018 Entry. An electronic version of this can be found on the careers webpages on the School website as well as Firefly.

University is an expensive route to take – tuition fees at most universities are now £9,250 and I suspect this will continue over the next few years. Traditionally university has been the natural route for the majority of our Year 13 students to take and so this booklet is designed to support both students and their parents through the university application process.

Please do not hesitate to contact Mrs Clare Brown, Head of Careers on 01883 343028 extension 307 or via email clare.brown@caterhamschool.co.uk if you have any questions.

A GLOSSARY OF USEFUL TERMS

Below are words / terms that should prove useful:

Adjustment:

If your examination results have exceeded the conditions of your firm (CF) choice then you can hold your CF offer for 5 days whilst you look for a course requiring higher grades.

Admissions tutor / officer:

These individuals are best contacted if you need help or advice about admission to a particular university. You will only really need to contact them if and when you have been offered a place at the university that they represent.

Apply:

The online system for applying for university. All students apply through the school.

Campus:

A campus is a site on which a university is located. It tends to describe a university whose buildings are clustered in one place rather than scattered throughout a city or town.

Centigrade:

This is undertaken by all Lower Sixth students in February and acts as a launch for the UCAS process. It gives advice about all courses at universities both in the UK and Europe.

Clearing:

The process, through the UCAS website, opens in July and continues until late September. It is there to assist students who have missed required grades, or who hold no offers, to find university courses which still have places available.

Collegiate system:

A university made up of separate colleges which together comprise the university, is called collegiate. In such universities, the college plays a crucial part in the lives of students. The only true collegiate universities in the U.K. are Oxford, Cambridge and Durham.

Combined / joint honours degrees:

Joint Honours programmes offer a pre-determined path including a set list of compulsory and optional modules. Combined Honours programmes allow you to pick modules freely within the subjects you choose, subject to timetabling constraints and the need to pick equal numbers of modules from each subject

Conditional Offer:

An offer made to a student with certain academic criteria attached.

Deferred entry:

This occurs if you decide to take a gap year and it simply means that you have decided to delay taking your place at university, usually for a year.

Degree grades:

Most U.K. undergraduates will emerge after 3 or 4 years with a Bachelor of Arts (BA) or a Bachelor of Science (BSc) degree. These can be classified thus, from best to worse:

- A First
- An Upper Second; 2:1
- A Lower Second: 2:2
- A Third, a pass (usually granted without honours).

Extra:

If you have applied for all five of your choices and not received an offer, then you can apply through Extra, one course at a time.

Firm Offer (CF):

This is your first choice university offer that you accept through UCAS.

Freshers:

A term deriving from the American for a student in his / her first year at university, a Freshman.

Insurance offer (CI):

This is your second choice university offer that you accept through UCAS.

Open Days:

These are organized by universities as a means by which prospective students can gain an insight into a particular university. They usually take place from June until November. Information on specific Open Days can be found [here](#) or on the individual university websites.

'Redbrick' Universities:

These universities were built in the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. Broadly speaking they are all the so-called modern universities e.g. Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Reading.

Russell Group of Universities:

This group is considered a kind of ‘Ivy League’ of the most prestigious universities in the U.K. There are 24 universities in the Russell Group. Please see [Russell Group Universities](#) for more information. There a variety of other university groups as well.

Sandwich courses:

These courses integrate academic studies with industrial, commercial or professional training. For example, it will involve 2 years of study, followed by a year in work and then a further year on the course.

Track:

This is the online system through which you monitor the status of your application. You will receive your offers through this system, reply to offers and make any amendments to your contact details.

U.C.A.S.

The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service is the central body (based in Cheltenham) though which all students must apply to gain access to a U.K. university.

UCAS Tariff:

A numerical offer system sometimes used instead of grades. There is a new tariff system for those student applying to university from 2017 onwards:

Grade	AS	A Level
A*	-	56
A	20	48
B	16	40
C	12	32
D	10	24
E	6	16

Unconditional Offer:

One of three types:

- An offer given to an applicant who has already satisfied the entry requirements, usually a student applying post results.
- A student who hasn't taken their final A level exams but is obviously a top academic may get an unconditional offer but this is rare. I have only known this to happen once in the last 15 years!
- An enticement from the university! Some universities are offering a student an unconditional offer if they make them their CF (first choice) university. Birmingham and Nottingham have both used this approach

ACADEMIC MATTERS AND DECISIONS

It is School policy that all students will start the Lower Sixth studying four A level subjects. Following Lower Sixth internal examinations and parents evening in late November/December, some students will drop a subject and continue with three A levels in the following January.

How do you decide which subject to drop?

- Internal exam grades will help to make the final decision.
- You should also consider the level of interest that you have in the subject; only continue with a subject that inspires genuine intellectual curiosity.
- Consider the extent to which subjects may link to your university or career plans. It is acceptable to drop subjects that have no bearing on your chosen university course.

If you are still unsure, please discuss the matter with the relevant heads of department.

A number of students will be encouraged to continue with 4 subjects at A Level. These tend to be students doing Maths and Further Maths or those who have a second language like German or Russian. If you are thinking of taking 4 subjects in the Upper Sixth, please see the Director/Deputy Director of Sixth Form or Mrs Brown first so that we can confirm time-table arrangements.

UNIVERSITY MATTERS

From about January in the Lower Sixth, students at Caterham begin to plan for university admissions through something called UCAS. This stands for the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service and all relevant details can be found on their web-site:

www.ucas.com

Students often forget or underestimate the help that schools and teachers offer them. I will consequently set out all the various aspects of UCAS advice that has been given so far (or will soon be given out) in order to remind both students and parents that a good deal of work has already taken place this year.

ADVICE / INFORMATION:

Morrisby:

- All Lower Sixth students are invited to sit the Morrisby Higher Education Questionnaire in the Lower Sixth.
- It provides some introductory advice about courses, universities and career options.
- All members of the Lower Sixth will have follow up meetings with the Head of Careers, Mrs Clare Brown.
- Further advice will be provided, as will information about specific courses and universities.

HEAP Online:

- The School also subscribe to Heap online which allows students to search courses within their predicted grades and subjects. To register to use this service, please click [here](#) where students can set up an account using the password YSSWJCRN. Once they have done this they need to change their password to something more memorable.

Upper Sixth Briefings:

- Most members of the Upper Sixth will give introductory talks about their UCAS experiences and offer advice about many different subject courses. These will take place at various times during the Lower Sixth and Upper Sixth years.

Career Workshops:

- All students will be given information about workshops at universities. See [Uni Taster Courses](#) for more information.
- A number of our students attend taster courses in subjects like Medicine, Law, Business, Nursing, Forensics, Working with Animals and Psychology. See [Workshop](#) or [Debate Chamber](#) for more details.
- The Physics Department encourage all those interested in Technology and Engineering to apply for Headstart courses that run at various universities. See [Headstart](#) for more information.

Tutors:

- All tutors will have discussions with their tutees about potential career and university options.
- The tutor is responsible for writing the highly significant UCAS Reference and will therefore play a crucial role in the next few months.

Oxbridge Meeting:

- Preliminary Oxbridge information will be given to the entire year group at an assembly.
- A Lower Sixth Briefing session on Oxbridge will be held.
- Pupils will then be invited to opt into the Oxbridge Programme by writing a letter of application and a follow up meeting will take place.
- OCs currently studying at Oxford/Cambridge will give talks about their experiences.

Open Days/University Visits:

- **We recommend that students start to attend Open Days at universities during the summer term of Lower Sixth as well as during the first two terms of the Upper Sixth. Permission will be given for a maximum of two Exeat days per term for these visits as we are conscious of the need to protect this valuable teaching time.**
- A number of departments have organized trips to universities including: Classics, Languages and R.S.
- Many students have also, informally, (often through older brothers or sisters) visited a wide range of universities.
- Subject staff will take a group of students to Oxford/Cambridge University during spring.
- See [Open Days](#) and individual university websites for more information.

Heads of Department and teachers:

- Advice has also been forthcoming from within departments about both courses and universities.
- Some departments have furthermore arranged relevant work experience for a small number of students.

Work Experience:

- An encouraging number of students have undertaken or booked work experience for the holidays particularly for vocational courses like medicine, law, teaching physiotherapy etc.
- The Careers Department has also been able to arrange some work experience for students.

Caterham Award:

- By July 2018, all Lower Sixth students will have completed 3 terms of the Caterham Award. This will be invaluable in the preparation of Personal Statements and also for tutors in order to complete UCAS references.

The Graduate Market:

- Published by Highfliers, this annual report can be very useful for understanding the graduate job market. Please see [The Graduate Market 2018](#) for the full report.

The next section will outline what will happen next.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

Outlined below are the various stages of the process from June 2018 to August 2019.

This may all seem a long way off; but believe me, time flies very quickly and the whole thing will soon be upon you. So please get thinking, get researching and get organized!

June 2018:

- AS/internal exams.
- Treasure Trail Session to facilitate research and effective decision making
- Advice clinics the Department Heads through the enrichment programme
- Open Days to attend.
- Meetings for all potential Oxbridge candidates with Mr Wells and Dr Dimakos.
- Meetings for all potential Vets, Medics, Physios or Dentists with Mrs Seal/Mr Quinton.
- Talk by ex-Caterham students on the university process.
- Teachers to pass subject references to tutors.

July 2018:

- UCAS and Higher Education talks and workshops during final week of term. This includes an introduction to the online application system, 'Apply', and talks from Admissions Tutors and Alumni.
- Universities should be visited during the summer holidays.

August 2018:

- AS results on Thursday 16 August.
- Tutors write individual UCAS References.

September 2018:

- University Personal Statement Workshops - First draft of Personal Statement to be completed.
- Final choices of universities to be made (5 in total except Medics, Vets and Dentists who are allowed 4)
- All references to be completed by tutors.
- By the end of September all Oxbridge, Medicine, Dentistry, Vet Science and Law applications should be completed by students.

October 2018:

- Mock interviews for Oxbridge / Medicine (and all others who need it) to be conducted by teaching staff.
- Optional mock interviews for all students to be conducted by a panel of parents and external interviewers, organized by Mrs. Brown.

November 2018:

- Optional mock interviews for all students to be conducted by a panel of parents and external interviewers, organized by Mrs. Brown.
- First university offers arrive.
- Open Days for universities where offers have been gained.

December 2018:

- Oxbridge interviews.

January – April 2019:

- Most offers and rejections are received between January and April of the Upper 6th year.
- Students are to make their final 2 university choices; a first choice (firm offer) and reserve university (insurance offer) must be identified and UCAS notified.

May – July 2019:

- Study leave and EXAMS.
- Clearing opens – July 1st

August 2019:

- A Level results.
- Clearing system operates for those students who have not obtained offers or who have missed their conditional grades.

Late applications can be submitted to UCAS between 15th January and 30th June, but universities are no longer obliged to consider them.

We STRONGLY advise students to complete their UCAS applications in the autumn term.

CHOOSING YOUR COURSE

There is often, at this stage, the temptation to think of universities before considering courses. This is understandable as Sixth Form students hear about how wonderful university X is or how good the social life is at university Y. ***Avoid that temptation and think course first.***

Remember, you are going to spend the next 3, 4 or even 6 years studying this subject or subjects so choose wisely. There are over 50,000 courses on offer so it may not be easy.

Clearly there are some in the Lower Sixth who have already made firm decisions, mainly about vocational courses like medicine, physiotherapy, speech therapy etc. For the rest of you, it is worth considering the advice outlined below. This is particularly important if you are considering a course that you have never studied before e.g. Psychology, Law, and Sociology etc.

Follow your instincts and interests:

- If you have a clear interest in a subject and you know that you would enjoy the subject matter at university then it is seriously worth considering for that reason alone. The best advice is often to simply follow your intellectual curiosity.

Discuss options with your teachers:

- Don't wait for a teacher to approach you; take the initiative. Make a point of discussing options with relevant staff (Teachers, Tutors, Year Heads or the Head of Careers). The next section gives you an idea of the people you should speak with for advice.

Consult relevant publications and websites (all available in the careers library):

- www.ucas.com
- University Prospectuses
- The Times Good University Guide
- [The Guardian League Tables](#)
- [The Complete University League Tables](#)
- University web-sites
- The Virgin Guide to Higher Education.
- Careers Department: for specialist guides e.g. *'Degree Course Offers'* by Brian Heap or the *Trotman Course Guides*.

Read through your Centigrade form:

- Much good advice is contained in the Morrisby HE report you have been given. Make sure you read it and follow the advice if applicable.

Consider possible Career Paths:

- It is asking much to expect most 17 year olds to know the career they wish to follow. However, if you have a broad idea, then that may help to narrow your course options. Always seek advice first.

RANDOM REMINDERS:

- **Remember** - if at this stage (like many others) you have no clear idea about a career path, then opt for a degree and course that you are likely to **enjoy**.
- **Remember** - be aware that many employers simply want to employ **graduates**, irrespective of the particular subject of their degree. For example, most accountants did NOT study accounting and finance at university.
- **Remember** - to check carefully the **course requirements**. Do not make the mistake for example of applying to do a degree in Physiotherapy when you did not opt for Biology at AS Level. ALL good Physiotherapy courses now insist on Biology!
- **Remember** - that some degree courses take not 3, but **4 years** to complete. This is usually the case for Scottish universities and for Language degrees.
- **Remember** - that some degree courses have a '**year out**' in the middle of the course (often abroad) extending the degree to 4 years. This is the case with Languages and increasingly for subjects like Politics where some courses offer a year in Washington or Brussels.
- **Remember** - to research carefully the meaning and expectations of **new courses** like Psychology, Sociology and Anthropology. For instance, one student was shocked to learn that she had to complete a module in Statistics as part of her Psychology degree.
- **Remember** - to consider **Joint Honours degrees** if you really enjoy 2 particular subjects. Many joint degrees are excellent and can give you more scope long term. For example Sports *with* Business Management or History *with* French can be just right for some students.
- **Remember** - to **be realistic** about your courses and destinations. There is no point in applying to universities whose entry grade requirements you have no real hope of matching. For example, Medical courses usually require straight A grades or higher. You will not get offers unless you are likely to achieve those grades.
- **Remember** - to always **check with us** first before applying.

And finally... a word on predicted grades.

Predicted grades are an important aspect of the application process. These are submitted by Heads of Department and predictions are made after lengthy consultation with teachers and following detailed examination of performance data including grade reports, test results, mock grades etc. The School will tend to err on the generous side in its predictions aware of the importance attached to them in terms of gaining good offers.

TEACHER ADVICE (Courses)

In order to broaden the UCAS information given to students, the following teachers have agreed to act as course advisors. We strongly recommend that you discuss options with them and, in particular, if you are looking at a university course that is not currently taught in the Sixth Form (subjects marked with *).

Accounting* / Finance*: Mr. Fahey

American Studies: Mr Murphy

Archaeology* / Egyptology*: Mrs Brown

Architecture*: Mrs Bell or Mrs Veldtman

Art: Mrs Bell or Mrs Veldtman

Biology / Zoology*: Mr. Quinton

Business / Management: Mr Moore, Mrs. Wallace, Mr James or Mr Weiner

Chemistry / Biochemistry: Mr Keyworth

Classics: Mr Waite

Dentistry*: Mrs Seal

Design Technology: Mr. Wilkinson

Dietetics*: Mrs. Brown

Drama / Performing Arts: Mrs Fahey

Economics: Mr. Fahey/Mr Weiner/Mr Moore

Education* / Teaching*: Mrs Brown

Engineering*: Mr Mansell

English: Miss O'Donnell, Mr Crombie

Geography: Mrs Mesher / Mr Terrell

History of Art*: Mrs Bell

History: Mrs James/Mr Salem / Mr Mills / Mr Cooper

Languages: Mrs McVitty, Mr Parker, Mrs Clifton

Law* / Criminology* / Forensics*: Mrs Brown

Maths: Dr Langdon, Mr Todd, Dr Dimakos

Medicine* / Pharmacy*: Mrs Seal, Mrs Brown

Philosophy*: Mrs Webster or Miss Smith

Physics: Mr Mansell

Physiotherapy*: Mrs Brown

Politics / International Relations*: Mr Murphy, Mr Cooper

PPE*: Mr. Salem, Mr Wells

Psychology: Dr Avery

Social and Political Science*: Mr Murphy/Mr Cooper

Sociology*: Mrs Brown

Speech Therapy*: Mrs. Brown

Sport / Physical Education: Ms. Leach

Teacher Training: Mrs Parker

Theology*: Mrs Webster

Veterinary Science / Animal*: Mrs Seal / Mrs Brown

War Studies*: Mr Murphy, Mr Salem, and Mr Cooper

CHOOSING YOUR UNIVERSITY

Most of you will apply to **5 universities**. Before doing so, there are a number of factors to be considered. Most are outlined below.

Geographic Area:

- Where in the U.K. would you like to be? Does Scotland or Wales appeal? Would you rather stay in and around the South East? Is it important to get as far away from home as possible!

Campus or City:

- Would you prefer the bright lights of a Manchester, Birmingham or Leeds? Would you rather the more self-contained, easily accessible Reading, Exeter or Kent?

Big or Small:

- Is big or small more beautiful for you? Does the fact that Manchester has the biggest concentration of students in Western Europe appeal? Would you rather apply to a smaller university in a smaller town where you feel less anonymous?

Old or New:

- Are you seduced by the thought of studying in the shadow of ancient buildings, majestic museums and stunning churches? Would you rather be surrounded by more functional structures, modern amenities and state of the art lecture theatres?

Non-academic factors:

- Are sports facilities critical? Is it important for the university to have a good reputation in music and drama? Will the quality of the local 'club' scene be decisive? Is it desirable to be near a national park so that you can keep up your interest in outdoor pursuits? Is it important that there is an active OTC (university equivalent of the CCF)?

Financial Considerations:

- It is worth stressing that some towns / cities are more expensive than others in terms of cost of living. London, Oxford, Bath, Bristol, Cambridge and Edinburgh tend to be on the expensive side whilst Hull, Lancaster, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle or Sheffield would be cheaper than the average.

Accommodation:

- If this is an important consideration then make sure you check that the university offers suitable accommodation to all freshers.

Reputation and academic excellence:

- There is a wealth of information published that gives detailed information on universities, for example <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/universityguide>

In order to further narrow your choice, remember the following:

Friends, family, Old Caterhamians:

Speak with as many people as you can about university destinations. Clearly, if you are considering Leeds, it is well worth chatting with someone who has studied there.

Teachers:

See the next section and speak with teachers about relevant universities.

Web-sites:

Search all possible universities on the web (a simple Google search is best). Some universities have '**virtual tours**' on their web-sites; these are well worth exploring.

Prospectuses:

Send off for as many relevant prospectuses as you need. These can be ordered on-line through the university web-sites and are **FREE**. Also worth requesting copies of **alternative prospectuses** as these tend to give an ever better insight to university life.

Visits / Open Days:

Make sure that you visit at least 2 or 3 universities, in particular your final few choices.

RANDOM REMINDERS:

- **Remember** – to **be realistic** with your chosen universities. Not everyone will have the grades to apply to Oxford, Nottingham or Warwick.
- **Remember** – if you are not sure how your results are likely to go then it is worth including a **spread of universities** in your final list of 5. By this I mean 2 aspirational, 2 on target and 1 reserve university choices. In so doing, you may get offers from the best but equally you will have a couple of insurance choices as back up.
- **Remember** – **Dentistry, Medical** and **Veterinary** applicants are restricted to a maximum of 4 choices, but can use the remaining 1 space to apply to other courses (which should of course relate to their main choices).

And finally...

Remember – it is important that you see Mrs Brown to talk tactics before you apply!

TEACHER ADVICE (Universities)

Please make a point of seeing the following members of staff if you want any further information about the universities outlined below:

Birmingham: Mr Terrell, Mrs Howden, Miss Gibbs, Mr Hall, Mrs Parker,

Brighton: Mrs Lomas,

Bristol: Miss Hanford, Mr Hall, Mrs Yankova

Cambridge: Mrs Mesher (Robinson), Mr M Anderson (Pembroke), Mrs Drummond (Clare), Mr Wells (Selwyn), Dr Langdon (Downing), Dr Robinson (Trinity Hall), Mrs Stedman (Kings), Dr Gray (Sidney Sussex), Mrs Buffini (Fitzwilliam), Mrs Wildsmith (Magdalene)

Cardiff: Mr Parker, Mr Weiner, Mr Jones

Durham: Mrs Seal, Mr Parker, Mr Cooper, Mr Godfrey

Exeter: Miss Hunter-Blair, Mr Mugridge

Glasgow School of Art: Miss Pateman

Goldsmiths: Dr Avery

Imperial: Mrs Whitwell

KCL: Mr Cooper

Kent: Mrs Bell, Dr Avery

Kent Institute of Art & Design: Miss Crick

Liverpool: Mr Mills

Leeds: Mr Richards

Leeds Metropolitan: Mr Wilkinson

London (UCL, LSE, Queen Mary, Goldsmiths): Mr. Fahey

London Metropolitan: Ms Wallace

London Goldsmiths: Mrs Bell, Miss Crick

Loughborough: Miss Leach, Miss Hart, Mr James, Mr Clarke

Manchester: Mr. Ogilvie

Middlesex: Mr Hitchings (IT)

Newcastle: Mrs Seal,

Nottingham: Mrs Sullivan

Oxford: Mr. Salem and Mrs Pearce (Lady Margaret Hall), Miss. Dawrant (Merton), Mr. Quinton (St Peter's), Mr Todd (Worcester), Mrs Hunter (Wadham), Mr Owen (Brasenose), Mr Waite (Keble), Mr Lander (University College), Mr Murphy (Trinity), Mr Mansell (St Hugh's), Mr Marlow (New College), Mr Gabriele (Lincoln)

Oxford Brookes: Mr Stamper

Reading: Mrs Mesher

Royal College of Music: Mrs Richards

Royal Holloway: Mrs Clifton, Mrs Parker

Royal Northern College of Music: Miss Gibbs, Mr Hall

Sheffield: Mr W Jones

Southampton: Miss Smith, Mrs Funnell (Finance Bursar)

St Andrews: Miss O'Donnell

Surrey: Mr Assen

Sussex: Miss Cox, Ms Wallace

UCL: Dr Robinson, Miss Penman, Mrs James

Ulster: Mr Patterson

Uni of Arts, London (Wimbledon School of Art): Ms Wallace

York: Mr Moore, Mrs Whitwell

OVERSEA UNIVERSITIES:

Aix En Provence, France: Mrs McVitty

University of Madison, Wisconsin: Miss Hanford

Loyola University, USA: Mrs Koi

University of Pretoria (TUKS) : Mr Van

University of South Africa; Mr Van

University of Jyväskylä, Finland : Miss Penman

University of Technology, Sydney : Mr Stamper

Clermont-Ferrand: Mrs Sullivan

University of Athens: Dr Dimakos

Anyone interested in applying to any overseas universities **MUST** see Mrs Brown by the end of September 2018 at the very latest. The application system for these organisations is more complex, often involving individual applications for each university, so you must allow extra time for these.

THE U.C.A.S. FORM

At first glance, the UCAS form and procedures look complex and bureaucratic. Actually, the process is fairly straightforward once you have chosen your universities and courses.

The only way you can apply to a UK university is through UCAS, so you need to ensure that you do it properly. It is therefore essential that you read the following carefully and that you ask advice accordingly. Speak with your tutors, head of year, older brothers and sisters, members of the Upper Sixth and your peers – there is much good advice out there; you must track it down.

70% of UCAS forms from Caterham will be sent by October half-term of the Upper Sixth so we need you to be organized, motivated and committed to keeping to deadlines. It is worth remembering that the sooner you submit the better.

Filling in the form:

All UCAS applications are made through the *online UCAS 'Apply' System*.

The following advice is worth noting:

Your personal details:

- Avoid nicknames!
- Avoid strange e-mail addresses!
- Don't forget your postcode!
- Be clear about your 'residential category'; this is important for the purposes of tuition fees

The rest is fairly self-explanatory.

Your choice of courses:

- You can apply to a maximum of 5 universities (fewer if you wish) or 4 for Medicine, Vet Science and Dentistry.
- It is vital that you include accurate details of course, campus and universities codes.
- For Art and Design routes, please see Ms Wallace/Mrs. Bell for further information.
- For Medicine, Physiotherapy, Dentistry and Veterinary Science please see Mr Quinton/Mrs Seal for further information.

Your education:

- There is no need to include your primary or nursery schools!

Your qualifications:

- All your GCSE and AS results should be included.
- All your A level subjects with grades pending.
- Any dance, drama, music or Young Enterprise qualifications should also be included.
- Do not include retakes.
- All international qualifications should be included alongside details of English language tests that you have taken.

Your employment history:

- Stress any relevant work experience here as well as any 'worthwhile' jobs that you have undertaken.
- Think twice before including the likes of 'car washing', 'baby sitting', 'dog walking' etc!

Your personal statement:

- See next section.

Your declaration:

- Remember, that by signing the declaration you are saying that the information you have provided is accurate and complete and that you agree to abide by the rules of UCAS!

Your reference:

- Your tutor will write your reference with input from your teachers, Head of House and Director of Sixth Form. The Caterham Award is a vital source of information for your reference.
- It will include reference to your attitude, motivation, organization and suitability for the course. It will also include your predicted grade.
- Remember that the school will ALWAYS be as positive as possible in its references.

Your submission:

- Once you are 100% happy with your application, you must inform your Director of Sixth Form (Upper) that you are ready to submit.

Remember: to check, double check, proof read... and then ask someone else to do the same.

Good luck!

THE PERSONAL STATEMENT

This section is crucial because it is the only part of the application where you have a chance to select and emphasise specific points about yourself. Clearly your academic potential and grades are the key factors BUT your wider experiences are also important.

How do Admissions Tutors use the Personal Statement?

- To help them select candidates
- To help them decide which candidates to interview
- To give interviewers options for questions
- To test whether the candidate understands the nature of the course
- To ascertain the level of interest that the candidate has in the course
- To help decide between borderline candidates

What information should be included in the Personal Statement?

- Reasons you wish to undertake the course – it may link to your career aspirations
- Your academic suitability for the course and reference to relevant academic assignments undertaken
- The reasons for your chosen A Levels and how they may contribute towards preparing you for university study
- The level of interest you have in the course i.e. what wider reading have you done
- Your wider interests and extra curricular activities including: sports, drama, music, CCF, Young Enterprise, Duke of Edinburgh, Preview, Debating etc.
- Details of relevant work experience; particularly when the course is vocational
- Your personal qualities and skills i.e. teamwork, leadership, IT, communication
- Your positions of responsibility i.e. team captain, prefect, mentor etc
- Examples demonstrating your willingness to work hard and persevere with tasks.

Universities are also very keen to see accurate, well-structured, well-planned statements displaying a good use of English.

What should you avoid on your Personal Statement?

- Don't waffle
- Don't refer to your qualities and skills without giving examples
- Don't start every paragraph with 'I'
- Don't make mistakes – proof read carefully and re-draft several times
- Don't refer to work experience without explaining the insights gained from it
- Don't make out that you are superman
- Don't say that your main interests include 'going to the pub' and 'listening to rock music'!

How should you structure your Personal Statement?

It is important to divide your statement into coherent paragraphs and you should aim to fill much / most of the page. Outlined below is merely a broad guideline.

Paragraph 1:

- State why you have chosen the course and your academic suitability to it.
- Explain (if appropriate) how it may link to your chosen career and you may include relevant work experience here
- Give examples of the specific topics you have enjoyed, the presentations you have made, the research that you have undertaken, the field trips you have embarked upon, the books you have read, the links to your chosen career

E.g. 'I have always been fascinated by the past, beginning with childhood interests in time-travel and mythology. At school, I have been particularly enthused by my history lessons and by the scope and variety of the subject matter taught. This interest has been developed with student exchanges to France and History field trips to Germany and Eastern Europe. Such opportunities have encouraged me to undertake a study in depth in 18th century French social history and I have also pursued some independent research into 20th century European dictators. Books like 'Hitler's Willing Executioners' by Daniel Goldhagen and the comparative study of 'Hitler and Stalin' by Alan Bullock have extended my knowledge and understanding of the subject as has my active membership of the History Society throughout my time in the Sixth Form. All in all, my commitment to History as well as my genuine skills in the subject has confirmed for me that I am suited to a degree course in History at university.'

Paragraph 2:

- Outline your wider academic skills and reference to your other A level subjects (equally, you may include work experience here)
- Bring out your wider interests that have academic value and links

E.g. 'My interest in languages has been developed through my passion for travel. Trips abroad to places like Spain, France and India have also broadened my perspective on life and have exposed me to a breadth of different cultures and traditions. In addition, I enjoy visits to the theatre both to the West End and to smaller theatre companies either English or French speaking. I hope to extend these cultural interests during the year abroad of my languages degree.'

Paragraph 3:

- Set out your areas of responsibility at school and in the wider community
- Include your wider interests and commitments e.g. library duty, social events organizer, voluntary work, junior sports coaching, supporting prep school pupils

E.g. 'Being nominated as a tutor group representative in the 6th form provided me with the opportunity to represent others in a responsible and fair manner. I had to extend my communication skills by speaking and listening in a large group. This experience should equip me to communicate effectively in an academic environment whilst at university. In addition, I have been involved in a number of drama productions as a technical assistant working well as part of a team and realizing the importance of meeting deadlines. Further responsibility has been gained as

a member of the charity committee that helped run the school's non uniform days and raise funds for the poppy appeal and Christian Aid. I intend continuing with similar cultural and social activities during my time at university.'

Paragraph 4:

- Stress your particular skills: computer literacy, languages, communication, working to deadlines, problem solving, using initiative, working independently etc.

E.g. 'Work experience as a clerical assistant in a busy office enabled me to develop a number of important skills. Working in a small team ensured that I was able to listen carefully to others and work co-operatively with a variety of different people. In addition, I often had the opportunity to work independently which allowed me to use my own initiative. Such skills will no doubt prove useful during my Business Studies degree.'

Paragraph 5:

- Your concluding remarks and observations

E.g. 'The combination of my A Levels and extra curricular activities has made me a self motivated, determined and diverse individual. I now feel prepared to take on the challenges and take advantage of all that university life has to offer.'

Random reminders:

Your Personal Statement should:

- Show that you have skills suited to university life
- Show that you are someone who will benefit from university life
- Show that you are going to benefit from the course
- Show that you are an interesting personality

Now:

- Consult a teacher in the relevant subject to give advice
- Show your parents, friends, tutor, year head etc
- Then draft, re-draft and re-draft until you get it right!

OPEN DAYS

The best way to judge whether or not you are suited to a university is to visit. The best time to visit is during an official Open Day. These are opportunities not only to visit the university facilities but also to explore your chosen department and meet current university staff and students.

As fewer universities interview candidates, Open Days (particularly department Open Days) are important events and enable prospective students to find answers to questions not included in the prospectus.

The sorts of questions you should ask are outlined below:

The Open Day Check-List

Subject specific:

1. Are my examination subjects acceptable for entry to the course?
2. What grades are usually required?
3. Is the course modular or not?
4. Are candidates interviewed before being offered a place?
5. What is the average intake of students each year onto the course?
6. What is the staff / student ratio OR male / female ratio?
7. Will I be at a disadvantage if I apply for deferred entry?
8. Is a gap year encouraged?
9. How is the course taught?
10. Will there be opportunities of study trips or visits abroad?
11. How good are the IT facilities?
12. How good is the careers service?
13. What do current students think of the course?
14. What is the reputation of the department locally, nationally, internationally?

General issues:

1. What are the university facilities like?
2. Are all first year students guaranteed accommodation?
3. What is the accommodation like?
4. What student welfare services are available?
5. Can I keep a car safely?
6. How good are the catering facilities?
7. How good is security on campus / in the town?
8. What clubs and societies are available?
9. How active is the Student Union?
10. How easily do students find work once they have graduated?

**For information on Open Days either consult [Open Days](#)
OR
See the website of the relevant university.**

Bear the following advice in mind before committing yourself:

- In the summer term of the Lower Sixth you MUST attend ONE Open Day but you should not attend more than TWO.
- You do not need to go to Open Days of all 5 of your choices – that becomes expensive both financially and in terms of time.
- You may wish to be cautious early on and then choose to attend Open Days at the universities that have given you offers. It may prove rather futile attending Open Days only to find that the university in question has rejected you.
- Remember that Open Days continue throughout the Upper Sixth year and students in the past have often applied for Open Days once they are fully immersed in the UCAS process.
- Try to team up with others to attend Open Days.
- Try and share lifts / transport – and PLEASE think of the boarders before you take off.
- Increasing numbers of universities hold Open Days on Saturdays and in the holidays – these are good times to go.
- You can visit London Colleges in the afternoon and evenings – thereby avoiding missing a whole day of school.
- A good time to visit universities is during our half-terms – universities operate as normal during these weeks and so you get to see them in action even if an Open Day is not scheduled.
- Try and make contact with an OC before heading off on Open Day. See Mrs Brown for contact details.
- Don't go to an unrealistic Open Day – for example, if you are likely to gain BCC at A Level, there is no point in attending an Open Day at Bristol (even if all your friends are going!!!).
- Don't forget to sign exeat forms first.

Oxbridge Open Days:

Attendance at these Open Days is by pre-arrangement only. They are either College or Department days and can be booked via the relevant web-sites (www.ox.ac.uk or www.cam.ac.uk). Some colleges offer accommodation and all offer a free lunch and refreshments. Speak with Mr. Wells, Mr Terrell and / or the relevant Head of Department for information about these; they are VERY useful.

INTERVIEWS

Once upon a time, all prospective university students were interviewed as part of the application process. Today, an interview is very rare. This is mainly because so many more students are going to university and it is simply too expensive to interview them all.

Essentially, ALL Oxbridge, Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary candidates WILL be interviewed along with some Lawyers, some Physiotherapists and most teachers. Drama and performing arts candidates will also ALL be required to interview / audition.

The following section therefore is of main concern to these groups.

If you are by chance invited for interview then consult this page and follow the advice given.

Before the interview:

- Organize your transport so that you get there in good time; nothing worse than rushing or arriving late!
- Dress appropriately; you don't need to wear a suit but smart casual is OK and best to avoid the nose ring!
- Read the university prospectus and information about the department and course very carefully.
- Re-read your personal statement and UCAS form; many interview questions are based on this.
- Prepare answers for obvious questions e.g. why have you chosen this course, what has attracted you to this university etc.
- Be prepared to discuss specific interests you have, books you've read or places you've visited connected to your chosen course.
- If you are applying for a course that you have not studied before e.g. Psychology make sure that you have a decent grasp of the subject before the interview.

During the interview:

- On the day, try to look calm, cheerful and reasonably relaxed. A firm handshake, eye contact and a smile always go down well!
- Don't try and bluff in the interview; they will see through you in seconds. If you don't know an answer, say so.
- Be engaging and enthusiastic; they like candidates who show a genuine interest in their subject.
- The interview is unlikely to come in the form of a 'grilling'. Rather, interviewers aim to put the candidate at ease and want to discuss their thoughts and ideas.
- You will often be asked at the end of the interview whether or not you have any questions; have one or two ready to ask BUT do not ask questions on topics covered in the material already sent to you by the university.

How will the school help?

In the autumn term of your upper 6th, the school will offer interview advice / techniques / practice etc. It will come in 2 forms:

1. Heads of Department:

If you have been called to interview for a degree in say Engineering you must inform the heads of Maths and Physics immediately. You must then arrange with them to give you a mock interview.

2. Parents Panel:

Mrs. Brown will organize for a group of experienced parents to give each candidate a mock interview. The benefit of this is that you will be interviewed by a panel of people that you don't know.

OFFERS

All applications submitted by **15th January 2019** will be considered (*we strongly recommend that you submit well before that*).

UCAS will acknowledge your application and will ask you to check that it has interpreted your application correctly. Your acknowledgement will include your **application number** as well as your **password** to enable you to log in to the UCAS computer to follow the progress of your application (UCAS Tracking).

Keep a careful note of your application number and quote it if and when you need to contact UCAS.

Decisions:

Decisions will then come from the universities in random order, although if you apply by 15 January, universities must make a decision by the beginning of May. They should start to arrive a few weeks after you apply and are transmitted to you via UCAS.

If you have a long wait, it possibly means that you are a borderline candidate

BUT

Don't read too much into it. Some popular universities give late offers as do many medical schools.

Before they make final decisions, they may invite you to interview or they may offer you a place and invite you to an Open Day.

You will receive one of three decisions:

- **U = unconditional offer**
You are in! No further qualifications are required.
- **C = conditional offer**
Still some work to do! If you accept the offer (say BBB or AAB) and you achieve the grades, then you are in.
- **R = rejection**
Sorry – no place!

Replies:

You have to reply to any offer you receive, **but not until you have ALL your decisions**. You will receive a **statement of decisions** from UCAS with an accompanying leaflet, which tells you what to do next. The statement will include a reply slip on which to inform UCAS which offer(s) you wish to accept.

The UCAS Points Tariff:

Offers from universities will either come in terms of grades (BBB or AAB) **OR** in terms of points.

GRADE:	AS	A2
A*	-	56
A	20	48
B	16	40
C	12	32
D	10	24
E	6	16

E.g. you may get an offer of BBB or 120 points

You may, however, receive a more specific offer.

E.g. BCC, but the B must be in Geography

Accept or decline:

Many students get 3, 4 or even 5 offers. You must reduce these down to 2. You may find yourself in the situation below where you have 4 offers:

E.g.

University 1: Conditional – BBC

University 2: Conditional - BBC

University 3: Conditional - CCC or 96 points

University 4: Rejection

University 5: Conditional - 120 points

You now need to make one **FIRM** and one **INSURANCE** offer and to decline the rest.

Firm Acceptance:

If you firmly accept an offer this means that it is your first preference. You can accept only ONE, you will not be able to change or cancel your reply.

Insurance Acceptance:

You may also hold one additional offer as an insurance acceptance. Usually, your insurance offer will be lower than your firm offer i.e. university 4 in the example above.

Decline:

If you decline an offer, you are indicating that you definitely do not wish to accept it. Be quite sure before you decide.

***Before you make your final decisions see Mrs Brown
to talk tactics.***

What do universities look for when they give offers?

- Intellectually able applicants
- Motivated applicants
- Competitive applicants
- Applicants who are likely to accept
- Applicants who are likely to make a valuable contribution
- Applicants who are likely to get the grades

What will determine the nature of the offers?

- If there is a high demand for a course, offers tend to be demanding
- If you apply to premier league universities, offers tend to be demanding
- If you apply for Medicine, Veterinary Science or Law, offers tend to be demanding.
- If you apply for Pharmacy, Psychology or Accountancy, offers are becoming increasingly demanding

What if I don't get any offers?

This is very rare, but alas it happens,

You must inform Mrs Brown immediately.

- You can apply for '**UCAS Extra**', which means you can re-apply for other courses or universities and your deadline is the end of June. UCAS will publish listings of courses that will still consider applicants.
- You can '**go through clearing**'. This system opens at the beginning of July although you cannot use it until your results have been released. There is still a chance that you can get into your chosen course if places are still available.
- You can re-take some of your exams and re-apply the following year.
- You can apply for an alternative course.
- You may decide to take a Gap Year and re-apply.
- You may decide to go into employment and delay going to university.

Remember – all is NOT lost if you get no offers. Much can be done in August to secure you a place at university if that is really what you want.

RESULTS DAY & BEYOND

Results will be issued on the **Thursday of the 3rd week of August.**

It is advisable to come into school on that day. If you are a boarder OR if you are going to be away during results, make sure you have a way of contacting the school to help you with your final decision-making. Also ensure that you have given your contact details to Mr Bailey.

Before results day you need to have thought of the following:

- Will I definitely accept my offer?
- Am I, even at this late stage, thinking of a gap year?
- Do I have a 'Plan B' in case I don't achieve the required grades?
- Do I understand 'Clearing'?
- Will I do better than expected?
- Have I accumulated all the relevant information for my chosen university?

Having one parent and a mobile phone on the day is very handy!

If your exams go well and you meet your offers:

- You need to confirm your place.
- Before the end of August UCAS will send you an official notification of the result of your application. If your place is confirmed, you will be asked to reply to the institution within 7 days.
- You need to deal with your university registration, accommodation and induction procedures
- You need to sort out your finances and loans.

Some universities will still offer you a place even if you have missed the conditional offer. The chances of this happening, however, varies greatly from course to course.

If your grades are better than expected:

If your results have met and exceeded the conditions of your conditional offer (CF) you might want to consider using Adjustment.

Runs from A Level results day 2019 until 31 August 2019 only.

To use Adjustment:

- Register in Track by clicking on 'Register for Adjustment' on your 'choices' screen.
- Contact a university or college to find another place. The institution will check that you exceed the conditions of your unconditional firm choice.
- The institution will tell you if they can offer you a place, and you tell them if you want to accept it.

- If you are accepted through Adjustment, your Track screen will be updated with the new choice and we will send you a confirmation letter.

If your grades are disappointing and fall short of your offers:

In the event that you fail to qualify for your chosen university, you will need to take advice from either Mr James, Mr Terrell, Mrs Brown, Mrs McVitty or Mr Weiner urgently. It is important that you make yourself available on both the Thursday and Friday of that week.

Then you will need to find out about vacancies through the clearing system.

Vacancies will be published in various newspapers including the Independent and on the UCAS web-site. Official help-lines are also available.

The facts about Clearing

Clearing is a service that operates between mid-July and September. You can take part in Clearing if you have already applied through UCAS and you are in one of the following categories.

- You have not received any offers.
- You have declined all your offers or not responded by the due date.
- Your offers have not been confirmed because you have not met the conditions (e.g. you have not achieved the required grades).

Make sure that you're available to speak to universities and colleges

Treat your Clearing application like a job application - deal with it yourself! Don't leave it to your parents or friends to sort out. During Clearing, you need to be available in person to deal with admissions tutors and to make decisions. It is important to plan your summer holidays so that you are at home when your exam results come out.

If you are eligible for Clearing an 'Add Clearing choice' button will appear on your Track 'choices' screen which you can use to apply for a course.

GAP YEARS

As the world shrinks, as opportunities expand and as prices fall, the popularity of Gap Years increases. Before deciding whether you are going to embark on one, it is worth considering the pros and cons.

Advantages:

- **Students** arrive at university a year older and a year wiser. They have also matured greatly (if they have used the time productively), have learnt to become independent and self-reliant. It is often easy to spot the Freshers who have taken a Gap Year, for not only do they look healthy, they are invariably more outgoing and confident.
- **Students** start their degree courses having had a break from the academic and examinations treadmill. They often appear fresher and ready for the academic challenges ahead.
- **Students** find that time between school and university is the best time to have a 'year out'. With tuition fees and other financial constraints facing today's students, many leave university with a serious burden of debt. A gap year, under such circumstances, is much less appealing.
- **Students** can and do, spend part of their gap year making and saving money for university. This is becoming increasingly important.
- **Students** can and do, gain much valuable work experience during gap years.

Disadvantages:

- **Time** – is often cited as a concern regarding gap years particularly for students thinking of pursuing long degrees like Medicine.
- **Continuity** – has been known to be a problem in certain subjects like Maths and Science whereby students simply forget much of what they learnt in the 6th form and have to spend much of their first year at university catching up.
- **Distraction** – is something that worries some parents. The fear is that by taking a gap year, a student will want to opt out of university all together (this only actually happens on very few occasions).

You decide!

Choosing / planning your Gap Year:

There is an abundance of organizations ready and willing to sign you up and part you from your money. It is therefore well worth planning and researching your options carefully to ensure that you embark on the right adventure for you and get value for money on the way.

It is worth asking yourself these key questions:

- Do I want to travel abroad or stay in the UK?
- Do I want to spend part of the year in the UK and part of it abroad?
- Do I want to work as a volunteer or for a local wage?
- Do I want to embark on a real challenge / adventure?
- Do I want to be involved in conservation work?
- Do I want to spend time in the Third World?
- Do I want to teach?
- Do I want to learn a new language?
- Do I want to learn a new skill?
- How will I pay for it?
- Have I informed my university that I will be deferring for a year?
- Do I need to save some money for university?
- Will I plan the year out myself or go through a reputable organization?
- Have I contacted the foreign office about safety issues?
- Have I taken out full insurance?
- Have I consulted my doctor regarding medical issues?

Remember: a gap year is an opportunity to have an adventure and widen your horizons. Do not expect to change the world or crusade for world peace! You can do all that once you have graduated and learnt some real skills!

Useful contacts:

There are many organizations that now cater for and organize Gap Years. Most relevant information and contacts are held in the careers library with Mrs. Brown.

It is worth, however, doing some preliminary research on the web. Start by doing a 'Google search' then the following sites are worth visiting:

- [Bunac](#) - working adventures worldwide e.g. summer camps in the USA
- [Changing Worlds](#) - voluntary and paid placements worldwide
- [Travellers Worldwide](#)- teaching, conservation, languages, photography etc
- [British Institute](#)- learning Italian in Florence
- [PGL](#) - work as a sailing instructor
- [Gap 360](#)- lots of interesting opportunities listed
- [Projects Abroad](#)- teaching and projects abroad
- [CESA](#) - language courses abroad
- [Inter Rail](#)- unlimited travel across 28 European countries from £160

Enjoy the research.

OXBRIDGE

We actively encourage students who have a very strong academic record and who would like to apply to Oxford and Cambridge universities to 'apply' in writing to Dr Dimakos/Mr Wells indicating their academic strength, subject(s) for studying at university and why you should seriously be considered.

This letter is to be given to Dr Dimakos/Mr Wells by late February!

It is important that we are clear at the very outset. For an application to be taken seriously the following profile needs to be met: -

- ❑ A very strong GCSE profile all A*/A (with ideally a minimum 6 A*)
- ❑ A passionate commitment to the chosen subject. Additional and broad reading around the subject will be assumed and tested.
- ❑ A desire to attend and energetically participate/contribute to the subject enrichment programmes, which will commence in the summer term.

Please remember that the Oxbridge teaching process is distinct and different from other universities in the UK. The system is based on tutorials (often with just one or two students) with the academic tutors. Your contact time might be quite limited and the system relies heavily on your own self-discipline, commitment and tenacious willingness to read, analyse and discuss. There will be nowhere to hide and you must enjoy this very focussed and intense study. The terms might be relatively short but they are relentless and demanding. If you think that this level of intensity is daunting and frightening be careful.

If you believe that you have met the above criteria/expectations then write to Dr Dimakos explaining why you would like to apply. Dr Dimakos will then seek subject teacher's views (and specifically Heads of Department) on your academic performance to date and your potential over the next year or two. If your teachers confirm your suitability and your academic performance in the summer justifies your expectations then the application will be encouraged for the October deadline. Dr Dimakos will schedule an interview with you hopefully before the end of the Spring Term.

We will also invite you and your parents to an evening in at the school to discuss your possible application and the expectations/requirements for that application to be processed in the autumn. The date will be confirmed later in the school year.

OTHER TESTS

Over the last few years as the university application process has become so pressured and the desire for differentiating applicants has intensified and, as a result, new tests/processes have been developed. The abolition of AS examinations as part of the whole A level has also prompted universities to introduce far more tests in order that they can identify the students who will cope with their courses.

- LNAT for Law and required currently by nine universities. Click [here](#) for more information.
- BMAT, UKCAT for Medicine, Dentistry and Vet Science. Click [BMAT](#) or [UKCAT](#) for more information.
- HAT (History: Oxford)
- EAT (English : Oxford)
- Physics Test
- PPE Test
- TSA (Thinking Skills Assessment: Cambridge a high proportion of Cambridge candidates)
- SATs or ACTs (for US universities)
- [Cambridge Pre-Interviews Assessments](#) for many courses at the University of Cambridge.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive and it is up to you to find out what extra tests may be required.

FINANCE

The majority of courses charge £9,250pa for tuition fees but this may change for 2019 entry. There is a wealth of information on the government website which can be found [here](#).

Click [here](#) for a link to the Student Loan online application form. If you apply for your loans by the application deadline, around the end of May, then you will be guaranteed your loan by the beginning of your course.

All student loans taken out will need to be repaid after graduation and once the student is earning over £21,000.