



CATERHAM
SCHOOL

Higher Education Guide 2020 Entry



CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	3
Advice and Information	4
Choosing your course	6
Choosing your university	8
The UCAS form	10
The Personal statement	12
Open Days	15
Interviews	17
Offers	19
Results and Beyond (incl clearing and adjustment)	22
Oxbridge	25
Admissions Tests	25
Finance	26
Appendix	27
(including) UCAS Timeline	27
Teacher Advice	30
Useful Terms	34

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Higher Education Guide 2020 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. An article in The Times on 24 January 2019 reported that MPs had approved plans for a rise in tuition fees to £11,100pa for any university that offered a traditional three year degree taught over a concentrated two year period, with 45 weeks of teaching as opposed to the normal 30. It will be interesting to see if this gets through the House of Lords and whether universities will accept the idea.

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.

The UCAS process

The university application process (UCAS) is a key part of 6th form life. The tutor, subject teachers and 6th form team will help to advise and guide pupils with regards to which courses and universities are right for them and we are happy to meet with parents who have questions about these extremely important decisions. We have a clear and robust process to ensure that pupils are properly prepared for their UCAS application in terms of sessions on personal statement writing, review and approval structures and interview and pre-testing practice where relevant. We also take our responsibility as reference writers extremely seriously and are fully supportive of all our pupils' applications. This is reflected in the extremely high offer rate we achieve, allowing our pupils to access the very best universities.

In order to help you understand what happens next, please refer to the UCAS Timeline which you will find in the appendix section on page 27.

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 the School and teachers can 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.

UNIFROG:

Unifrog is an online resource that brings together every university course, apprenticeship, and college course in the UK, as well as other opportunities, such as School Leaver Programmes, MOOCs as well as every college at Oxford and Cambridge. This makes it easy for our pupils to compare and choose the best university courses, apprenticeships or further education courses for them.

- Additionally the platform helps pupils write their personal statement, applications and CVs by guiding them through the process and allowing our teachers to give live feedback.
- We would encourage you to use the platform with your son or daughter so you can support them through the process of deciding their next step and I am sure this will help to start and develop conversations about appropriate courses and university choices.
- We have also set up a parent login so that you can use Unifrog as if you were a student yourself, allowing you to see how the system works and help with your son or daughter's research. The form code you will need is "caterhamparent" and you can sign up at: [Unifrog](#)

Career Workshops:

Many universities and organisations provide taster days and residential courses which can help students research their ideas.

- 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 Conferences](#) 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.

Head of Careers:

Mrs Brown is available in the careers office on a full time basis. Students can either drop in to discuss their ideas or make an appointment via email or in person. She is involved in advising students about their choices and is instrumental in the UCAS process.

Tutors:

- All tutors will have discussions with their tutees about potential career and university options.
- The tutor is responsible for compiling and editing the UCAS Reference.

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 organised trips to universities including: Classics, Languages and Philosophy and Theology
 - 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.

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.

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.

Typical Offers and UCAS Grades:

When researching their ideas, it is vital that students take note of the typical offer advertised on the university websites. This is the A level grade requirement usually required for that particular course at that particular university. This means that the university generally expects the student to be predicted these grades by their school. However, the universities are under no legal requirement to offer all successful applicants the published typical offer and they are within their remit to ask for lower or sometimes even higher grades!

UCAS grades are an important aspect of the application process. These are submitted by Heads of Department and they are predictions made after lengthy consultation with teachers, 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.

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). See Appendix 1 for more information.

Consult relevant publications and websites:

- www.ucas.com
- University Prospectuses
- The Times Good University Guide
- The [Complete University Guide](#)
- [The Guardian League Tables](#)
- [Which? University](#) which offers a really helpful [A level Explorer](#) search, where you can search for places according to the grades you think you might achieve. Here you can also access the excellent [Getting into Uni](#) guide.
- University web-sites

- Careers Department: for specialist guides e.g. *'Degree Course Offers'* by Brian Heap or the *Trotman Course Guides*.
- The School magazine [OMNIA](#) also details some Old Caterhamians experiences of life at university and the subjects they are studying.

Many of the above can be found in the library and the careers office.

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.
- [Subject Guides](#) on the UCAS website are excellent resources to use.

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 A 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.

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. Use [OMNIA](#) to read about OC's experiences.

Teachers:

See Appendix 2 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.

REMINDERS:

- **Remember** – to **be realistic** with your chosen universities. Not everyone will have the grades to apply to Oxford, Bath 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.

THE UCAS 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.

Many UCAS forms from Caterham will be sent by October half-term of the Upper Sixth so we need you to be organised, motivated and committed to keeping to deadlines.

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).
- **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).
- All courses and courses codes are now available on the accompanying drop down list on UCAS Apply.
- For Art and Design routes, please see Mrs Veldtman for further information.
- For Medicine, Physiotherapy, Dentistry and Veterinary Science please see Mr Quinton/Mr Bovet-White 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.
- 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', 'babysitting', '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. Unifrog 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.

IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO CHECK YOUR SPELLING AND GRAMMAR.

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 organiser, 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 we encourage you to attend university open days. You are permitted to attend a maximum of two per term (during school hours). Weekend open days are becoming more frequent and are encouraged.
- 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!!!).

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

Before the interview:

- Organise 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 organise 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 2020** 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 Track).

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.

Offers are made online through UCAS Track. Many universities will make offers immediately or within a few weeks of receiving your application. Some will not make decisions until after the application deadline on 15 January. This is called a gathered field.

Anyone applying for Oxbridge or for Medicine, Vet medicine or Dentistry will be called for an interview before any offer will be made.

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 (Conditional Firm or CF)** and one **INSURANCE (Conditional Insurance or CI)** offer and to decline the rest.

Conditional Firm:

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.

Conditional Insurance:

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 if I don't get any offers?

This is very rare, but alas it happens, and you should speak to Mrs Brown urgently

- 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 fully charged 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](#). Adjustment is a chance for you to reconsider where and what to study. If you've had a conditional firm choice accepted – and therefore made into an unconditional firm choice – you could potentially swap your place for one on another course you prefer.

You only have five 24 hour periods (including weekends) within this time to use it, starting from when your conditional firm (CF) offer changes to unconditional firm (UF), or on A level publication day – whichever is the later. If your offer goes UF less than five days before 31 August, you'll only have whatever time is left between then and 31 August.

Runs from A Level results day 2020 until 31 August 2020 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 the Sixth Form team 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 on the UCAS web-site. Official help-lines are also available.

The facts about Clearing

Clearing is how unis and colleges fill any places they still have on their courses. It's an ideal way for you to find another course. You find courses (with vacancies) that interest you, and contact universities or colleges directly, to see if they will offer you a place.

[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.

If you click on the Clearing link above, it will take you to the UCAS information page, where you will find detailed information but I have copied the basics from their website below.

- **Ask for Clearing advice**

Talk to an adviser at your school, college, centre, or careers office – they can talk you through alternative courses/subjects. **Mrs. Brown is available in the Pye 6th Form workroom on results day, to assist with clearing.**

- **See what courses are available**

Use our search tool to find courses – it's the only official vacancy list. If you can't find the course you're looking for:

- consider different subjects – you don't have to stick with your original idea. You could also look at joint honours courses, so you can study a mix of subjects
- keep checking – unis update their course information regularly. You might not find the exact unis/colleges/courses you were looking for – some might be full, but some might get vacancies later on

- **Talk to any unis or colleges you're interested in**

Before you add a Clearing choice in Track, call the uni and give them your Clearing number (you can find this in Track), and Personal ID, so they can look up your application.

- Ask if they'd accept you – they might reconsider you (maybe for the same course) even if you applied to them earlier in the year.
- Get informal offers over the phone – maybe from a variety of universities and colleges – then decide which one you want to accept.
- Take a look around the campus – if you have the time, it's the best way to see what a university/college is like – most will be happy to meet you and show you around. Alternatively, see if they have a [virtual tour](#).

- **Add your Clearing choice in Track**

Only add a Clearing choice once you have permission from the university or college.

- Click 'Add Clearing choice', and fill in the course details by the date the university/college gave you on the phone.
- This counts as you definitely accepting the offer, so if they confirm, it'll show as an acceptance on your 'Choices' page in Track.
- You can only add one choice at a time, but if the university/college doesn't confirm your place, you'll be able to add another.

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 email is to be sent to Dr Dimakos/Mr. Wells by early 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 7s and above, ideally with a minimum seven grades at 8 or 9
- ❑ A passionate commitment to the chosen subject. Additional and broad reading around the subject is essential, as is preparation for the admissions tests (in most subjects).
- ❑ Attendance and participation in / contribution to subject enrichment programmes

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 fellows. 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.

ADMISSIONS 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, UCAT for Medicine, Dentistry and Vet Science. Click [BMAT](#) or [UCAT](#) (previously 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.

A number of these can be sat in school. Please speak to your Head of Department or Mr. Bailey to find out which.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive and it is up to you to find out what extra tests may be required. There are also deadlines for applying and sitting for some of these admissions tests. It is your responsibility to find out what you need.

STUDENT FINANCE

When it comes to paying for your university education, there are two student loans that you need to think about – tuition fees and the maintenance loan.

Tuition fees, of which the majority of universities charge £9,250 currently, are paid by the Student Loans Company directly to the university. The maintenance loan you are able to claim depends on household income and whether you are living at home whilst studying, and is paid directly to you in three yearly instalments.

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.

Sadly all loans need to be repaid! So what happens?

- You do not start paying back your loan until the April after you have graduated.
- You do not pay anything until you are earning over £25,000
- You will repay 9% of everything earned above £25,000
- Your employer will pay this directly to the Student Loans Company
- It does not go on your credit file
- Any amount owing is wiped clear after 30 years!

Martin Lewis offers some extremely good advice on his website, [Money Saving Expert](#).

Appendices

1. UCAS Timeline

Date	All other applications	Early applications (Oxbridge, Medics, Dentists, Vets)
Spring term 2019 L6		
January	UCAS introduction evening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline of the process for parents and pupils Individual Research Projects launched <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optional, but recommended for all 	UCAS introduction evening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline of the process for parents and pupils Individual Research Projects launched <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compulsory for all Oxbridge applicants Oxbridge introduction evening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlighting the differences in the Oxbridge process for interested pupils and parents Students interested in applying for Oxbridge register their interest
February		Preliminary internal Oxbridge interviews
March		Practice pre-test session
Throughout the term	Subject enrichment sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All students should be attending these in their chosen subject areas Higher level enrichment programme Compulsory for early application students, optional for all others	Subject enrichment sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All students should be attending these in their chosen subject areas Higher level enrichment programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compulsory for early application students, optional for all others
Summer term 2019 L6		
Throughout the term	Subject enrichment and higher level enrichment programme continuing Students to be researching university choices with the help of the 6 th form team	Subject enrichment and higher level enrichment programme continuing Students to be researching university choices with the help of the 6 th form team
June		Visits to Oxford and Cambridge
Arts week	A variety of sessions run for students, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal statement writing UCAS Apply Student Finance 	A variety of sessions run for students, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal statement writing UCAS Apply Student Finance

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research of suitable courses Open days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research of suitable courses • Open days
Summer Holiday	Continued progress on university application including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open day visits, taster days and further research of possible university choices • Enrichment reading • Work experience • First draft of personal statement 	Continued progress on university application including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open day visits, taster days and further research of possible university choices • Enrichment reading • Work experience • First draft of personal statement
Autumn term 2019 U6		
September	Enrichment day, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalising UCAS Apply • Refining personal statements workshop with visiting universities Feedback on personal statements to be sought and acted upon from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject specialist (by 15th September) • Tutor (by 6th October) 	Enrichment day, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalising UCAS Apply • Refining personal statements workshop with visiting universities • Practice interviews with Old Cats • Post-summer results interview Second pre-test practice paper Feedback on personal statements to be sought and acted upon immediately on return from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject specialist • Tutor • Early application mentor
15 th September		Final references to be submitted. These must have been checked and approved by early application mentors. Students' UCAS Apply to have been checked for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common errors • Suitability of university choices
15 th September		Deadline for submission of UCAS Apply and personal statement. Your Apply form must have been checked by your tutor.
13 th October	Deadline for submission of UCAS Apply and personal statement. Your Apply form must have been checked by your tutor.	

15 th October		Final external deadline for submission to UCAS
2 nd November	Check if pre-tests apply	Majority of university pre-tests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This mainly applies to early applications, but also some other courses – check with departments and see http://www.admissionstestingservice.org/
November	Individual Research Projects due in followed by the presentation evening for finalists	Individual Research Projects due in followed by the presentation evening for finalists
December		Candidates called for interview
Spring term 2020 U6		
Early January		Decisions received from Oxbridge
15 th January	External deadline by which all applications must be received by UCAS. None of our students should be aiming for this deadline as there is no advantage in delaying the process.	
February	Upper Sixth Parents Evening, where firm and insurance offers can be decided based on progress.	Upper Sixth Parents Evening, where firm and insurance offers can be decided based on progress.
Summer term 2020 U6		
May	Firm and insurance choices must be made on UCAS Apply. This date may be delayed if offers come later than 31 st March, which will be shown on a pupil's UCAS tracking system.	Firm and insurance choices must be made on UCAS Apply. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This date may be delayed if offers come later than 31st March, which will be shown on a pupil's UCAS tracking system.
After Firm/Insurance choices being made	Accommodation applications start The process varies between universities but in general pupils will be able to apply for accommodation at their Firm choice as soon as the choice is made, so research into halls should be ongoing from April.	Accommodation applications start <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The process varies between universities but in general pupils will be able to apply for accommodation at their Firm choice as soon as the choice is made, so research into halls should be ongoing from April.
May	Student Finance needs to be applied for between January and May to guarantee start of course payment.	Student Finance needs to be applied for between January and May to guarantee start of course payment.
August	A level results day	A level results day

2. TEACHER ADVICE

Below is a list of teachers with their degree subject and university information. Please do speak to them if you are interested to hear more about the course or the university.

University	Teacher	Degree
Birkbeck	Mr Salem	MA in Modern History
Birmingham	Mr Terrell	Combined Hons Geography/Sport and Recreation
Birmingham	Miss Gibbs	Applied Linguistics
Birmingham	Mrs Parker	Masters of Education
Birmingham	Mr Anderson	Masters in Health and Social Care Policy
Bretton Hall (no longer)	Mrs Fahey	Drama and Dance
Brighton	Miss Hookway	English and Linguistics
Bristol	Mrs Yankova	English Lit with term abroad
Bristol	Mrs Roberts	French and Spanish
Buckingham	Mrs Griffiths	PGCE
Cambridge	Mr Anderson	General Engineering
Cambridge	Ms Wildsmith	English Literature
Cambridge	Mr Wells	French and German
Cambridge	Dr York-Anderson	Biological Natural Sciences
Cambridge	Dr York-Anderson	MPhil Molecular Biology
Cambridge	Dr York-Anderson	PhD Molecular Biology
Cambridge	Dr Dimakos	Maths Part III
Cambridge	Dr Dimakos	PhD Maths
Cambridge	Mrs Unwin	Modern and Medieval Languages - French and Spanish (Linguistics modules)
Cambridge	Mrs Roberts	PGCE
Cambridge	Dr Langdon	Natural Sciences (Maths, Physics, Chemistry , Cell Biology, Genetics, History and Philosophy of Science)
Cambridge (Clare)	Mrs Drummond	English
Cambridge (Homerton)	Mrs Howgego	PGCE Secondary Science
Cambridge (Robinson)	Mrs Mesher	MA in Geography
Cambridge (Sidney Sussex)	Dr Gray	English
Cambridge (Trinity Hall)	Dr Robinson	Nat Sci (Zoology)
Cardiff	Mrs Yankova	PG Diploma in Journalism
Cardiff	Mr Parker	European Politics

Cardiff	Mr Weiner	Economics
Cardiff Met	Mr Muttit	Sport and Exercise Science
Centre for Urban and Regional Studies	Mr Terrell	MPhil National Park Management
Clarkson, USA	Miss Walters	Aeronautical Engineering
Courtauld Institute of Art	Dr Gray	MA and PhD History of Art
Durham	Mr Crombie	Combined Honours in Arts (English and Philosophy)
Durham	Mrs Godfrey	Psychology
Durham	Dr Sinclair	Physics
Durham	Mr Parker	Spanish (with Italian)
English	Miss Cox	Sussex
Exeter	Mr Mugridge	Geography
Exeter	Mrs DeSilva	Business Economics with European Study (Spanish)
Exeter	Mrs Hunter-Blair	Spanish and Mathematics
Gloucestershire	Mrs Davies (Bursarial)	Joint Honours Physical Geography and Human Geography
Goldsmiths	Miss Crick	MA Contemporary Art Theory
Goldsmiths	Dr Avery	MSc Occupational Psychology
Goldsmiths	Dr Avery	PhD Research Psychology
Imperial	Dr Sinclair	Postgrad work Physics
Imperial	Mr Nagar	Chemistry with management
Kent	Dr Avery	Psychology
Kingston	Mrs Davies (Bursarial)	Geographical Information Systems (GIS)
Leeds (30 years ago)	Mrs Veldtman	Creative Arts
Loughborough	Miss Hart	Sport and Exercise Science
Loughborough	Miss Hart	PGCE
Loughborough	Miss Hart	MSc Education
Loughborough	Mr Goakes	Design
Loyola University of Maryland	Mrs Koi	Communications, Public Relations and Advertising
Manchester	Mr Soltysiak	MChem Chemistry with Patent Law
Manchester	Mr Soltysiak	PhD Biological Chemistry
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens	Dr Dimakos	Maths
New Hampshire, USA	Miss Simpson	Kinesiology
Nottingham Trent	Mrs Graydon	Broadcast Journalism
Open University	Mr Lander	MSc Maths
Open University	Mr Parker	MSc Econ

Oxford	Mr Quinton	Biology
Oxford	Mr Gabriele	English and History (Modern)
Oxford	Mrs Griffiths	Mathematical Sciences
Oxford	Mrs Hunter-Blair	Classics
Oxford	Mr Buchan	Maths
Oxford (Brasenose)	Mr M Owen	Classics
Oxford (Keele)	Mr Waite	Classics
Oxford (Keele)	Mr Salem	PPE
Oxford (Pembroke)	Mrs Webster	Theology
Oxford (St Edmund Hall)	Mrs R Wallace	Geography and PGCE
Oxford (University College)	Mr Lander	Maths
Oxford Brookes	Mr Stamper	Hospitality Management/Hotel and Catering Management
Plymouth	Mr Tyldesley	Chemistry and Environmental Science
Queensland, Australia	Miss Brand	
Reading	Mrs Mesher	PGCE
RNCM	Miss Gibbs	Music
Roehampton Institute	Mrs Yankova	PGCE in English Literature
Royal College of Art	Mr S Taylor	Ceramics and Glass (2 Year Masters)
Royal Holloway	Mrs Parker	Maths and Music
Sheffield	Mr W Jones	German and French
Southampton	Miss Smith	English Literature and Philosophy
Southampton	Mr Bovet-White	Biomedical Sciences
St Andrews	Mr G Owen	History
St Andrews	Dr Sinclair	Lives there and knows well.
St Mary's Twickenham	Mrs McVitty	PG
Sussex	Mr W Jones	
Sussex	Dr Sinclair	Brief work Physics
Trinity College Dublin	Mr G Owen	History
UCL	Dr Sinclair	Biomed work
UCL	Dr Robinson	PG Palaeontology and Developmental Biology
UCL	Mrs R Wallace	MA Geography Education
UCL	Mr Fahey	Economics and MA Leadership
Ulster	Mr Patterson	Sports Studies, PGCE
Université de Provence	Mrs McVitty	Modern Foreign Languages
University of Laval, Quebec City, Canada	Mr W Jones	

University of Mannheim, Germany	Mr W Jones	
University of Melbourne	Miss Henry	Psychology
University of Melbourne	Miss Henry	Linguistics and Applied Linguistics
University of Technology, Sydney	Mr Stamper	MA in TESOL
Utrecht, Netherlands	Miss Brand	Vet medicine, Toxicology and Environmental Health
Westminster	Mr Patterson	Broadcast Journalism
Westminster	Mrs R Wallace	MA Town Planning
York	Mr Moore	Economics
York	Mrs Howgego	Chemistry with Year in Industry

3. 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.

Conditional Firm (CF):

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

Conditional Insurance (CI):

This is your second 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.

Open Days:

These are organised 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.

UCAS.

The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service is the central body (based in Cheltenham) through which all students must apply to gain access to a U.K. university. It is also an excellent place to research the courses available.

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:

- 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
- An offer given to an applicant who has already satisfied the entry requirements, usually a student applying post results.