

OAKLANDS CATHOLIC SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

UCAS & HIGHER EDUCATION INFORMATION



Dear Student/Parent,

The information that follows provides a guide to choosing university courses. This starts the process of applying to Higher Education, which will continue in earnest after exams and in the months that follow.

We trust you will find it useful. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any queries.

Main deadline dates

- ✗ **June/July** – completion of Personal Statement
- ✗ **17 October 2024** deadline for applications to Oxford or Cambridge universities and for applications to **medicine, dentistry and veterinary medicine/science**
 - School Deadline - 20 September 2024
- ✗ **15 November 2024** school deadline for completion of form in all other applications
- ✗ **29 January 2025** – official UCAS deadline

Your Higher Education Options:

Overview Questions:

1. Do I want to continue my education post-18 at a university or a college?
2. What course(s) would be best to study?
3. Which institution(s) would be most suited to my needs?

By the end of Year 12, some students already have their future career plans firmly decided and know what HE qualification they need to reach their goal. They may well feel confident about their choices and the steps they need to take in the future. *However, they may be over confident or unrealistic.*

Others, perhaps the majority, do not have a clear career goal, and therefore aren't sure whether to continue in HE, or what course they should take. Doubts of this type can lead to feelings of anxiety and insecurity. *There is no need to worry, but there is no excuse for putting things off, if you are waiting to be certain about your future, you'll be waiting a long time!*

Some students are quite sure that university is not for them – they have had enough of books and writing, and now they just want to get a job and earn money. Some may know what type of work they would like to do, others may not. *That's fine, as long as you have looked at all the options, listened to advice, and have worked out an alternative job plan. It may be well worth starting the application process, even if you don't expect to go to university, since that way you can keep options open.*

Key things to Remember:

- Don't put off difficult and important decisions about your future – **keep to the deadlines for UCAS applications.**
- Don't dismiss the idea of going to university just because no one in your family has been, or out of misguided prejudice.
- Get a clear idea of what you can realistically aspire to – and what you can't.
- **Be keen to seek out and listen to the advice of others!**

Getting help on deciding on a university course – the Hub on www.ucas.com is invaluable for researching and shortlisting universities.

Deciding what to study and where

This is a long, complex and difficult process.

The pages and links in this section are designed to help you go about it in a thorough and methodical way.

It is particularly important that you take notes as you research, so as to avoid having to go back to check over important details. You will find a number of files in this section to help you to do that.

WEBLINKS:

Key sites

www.ucas.com

www.discoveruni.gov.uk

www.whatuni.com

Newspaper guides and rankings

www.guardian.co.uk/education/universityguide

university.which.co.uk/Guide

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/good-university-guide-in-full>

www.universitycompare.com

<https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/complete-university-guide>

www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk

Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary courses:

www.dentalschoolscouncil.ac.uk

www.rcvs.org.uk (Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons)

bma.org.uk/developing-your-career/becoming-a-doctor/entry-to-medical-school

www.medschools.ac.uk/studying-medicine

www.ucat.ac.uk

<https://www.admissionstesting.org/for-test-takers/bmat/>

Oxbridge

www.study.cam.ac.uk/undergraduate/

<https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/apply/statistics>

www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/facts-and-figures/admissions-statistics>

What restrictions are there on course choices?

The UCAS system imposes some important restrictions on the number and range of courses you can apply for:

- You only write one personal statement that is sent to all the universities you apply to, so the same statement has to 'work' for all. In practice, this means that you should only apply to courses which are confined to one or two subject areas.
- You may choose a maximum of **FIVE** degree courses (including more than one course at the same institution)
Or
- **FOUR** in the case of (i) medicine, (ii) Dentistry and (iii) Veterinary Medicine or Veterinary Science
Or
- You CANNOT apply to both Oxford and Cambridge

What type of degree course appeals to you?

Choosing a Degree Course

Here are some initial ideas to consider about the type of course you want to study:

1. To continue with **a subject you are studying** in the Sixth Form and are familiar with, e.g. Maths, Physics, Art.
2. A **completely new** subject - maybe one not available at A level, such as Social Anthropology, Marine biology, Pharmaceutical Chemistry, Linguistics or Genetics.
3. To link two subjects together in a **joint degree** course. These could be two familiar subjects or two new subjects or one of each.
4. To study three or more subjects in a **combined or modular** degree (eg. a Liberal Arts and Sciences Degree).
5. A **vocational** degree course leading towards a particular career (eg. teaching, medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, engineering and physiotherapy).
6. A **sandwich** course (4 years) which will include a year in the workplace or abroad.
7. A **foundation** degree.

What to look for in the UCAS Entry Profile

Be meticulous in researching the details of courses!

The **ENTRY PROFILE (EP)** of the course on the UCAS website gives the following information:

About the university – Contains general information about the institution, including accommodation, scholarships & bursaries, sport and careers.

What does this course offer me? – Provides specific information about the course. There may be information about specific skills and career progression.

What qualifications do I need? – Here you need to look at the Specific Course/entry requirements.

Tariff Points and Grades

UCAS Tariff points are allocated to qualifications generally studied when learners are aged 16-18. There is a Tariff calculator to show the points for different qualifications.

Many qualifications are not on the Tariff so don't worry if you can't find them on the calculator:

<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/tariff-calculator>

<http://www.universityfinder.org.uk/ucas-points-calculator.html>

This does not mean universities and colleges do not accept them. They will accept a wide range of qualifications studied around the world so check the entry requirements in Course Search for the courses you're interested in.

Remember the UCAS Tariff points only apply to Level 3 qualifications, not Level 2 qualifications such as GCSEs.

The main purpose of the UCAS Tariff is for universities to report data to government bodies. However some universities and colleges use UCAS points in their entry requirements so you may be interested in the points given to different qualifications.

The UCAS Tariff calculator is an indicative guide only:

Grade	A-level points	AS-level points	Extended Project Qualification points
A*	56	N/A	28
A	48	20	24
B	40	16	20
C	32	12	16
D	24	8	12
E	16	4	8

UNIVERSITY OPEN DAYS

These start in March and run through to the Autumn. Most universities will have a choice of days, but it is advisable to do visits before the summer, especially after exams, as college time is much more flexible then. You will also be better prepared for getting your applications in early. Universities start making offers as soon as the application process opens, even though the deadline is January.

Details of open days can be found on the university websites and in prospectuses. Go to www.opendays.com to find all open days in a calendar format.

APTITUDE TESTS

There are increasing numbers of separate tests for students applying to specific courses. Do you need to take a separate admissions test in addition to your A Levels? When do you need to register? When is the deadline for your test?

BMAT – this is no longer used

Oxford University Aptitude Tests are required for a number of courses. All Oxford admissions tests (with the exception of the LNAT for Law) are organised by the Admissions Testing Service. They take place in early November 2024, and you must register by **30th September 2024**

LNAT Nationals Admissions Test for Law used by 11 law schools. If you are applying to study Law, you will need to take the LNAT between September and October 2024. Exact dates are yet to be published – use this link to keep up to date. <https://lnat.ac.uk/registration/dates-and-deadlines/>

MML Cambridge admissions test for Modern and Medieval Languages

STEP required for Mathematics at Cambridge and Warwick, and encouraged by Bristol, Oxford and Imperial College.

TSA Thinking Skills Assessment used by most Cambridge University colleges for Computer Science, Natural Sciences, Engineering and Economics and by Oxford University for PPE and E & M applicants.

Cambridge Aptitude Tests are arranged after your application and are sat on the day of interview.

UCAT: An aptitude test for Medicine and Dentistry used by 26 universities.

Websites:

<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/entry-requirements/admissions-tests>

www.admissionstestingservice.org/our-services/subject-specific/step/about-step/

www.ucat.ac.uk

<http://www.admissionstestingservice.org/>

www.admissionstestingservice.org/our-services/thinking-skills/tsa-cambridge/about-tsa-cambridge/

www.lnat.ac.uk/

www.mml.cam.ac.uk/

Shortlisting courses

Use the UCAS website, university prospectuses, DiscoverUni, Which? University and other sources to make your initial shortlist. You don't need to use all the spaces provided, but there is no harm in having quite a long shortlist!

Course title/Institution	Course Code	Entry Requirements	Good Points	Bad Points	Your ranking

APPRENTICESHIPS:

Apprenticeships have equivalent educational levels.

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

Who can apply

You can apply for an apprenticeship while you're still at school. To start one, you'll need to be:

- 16 or over
- living in England
- not in full-time education

[Find an apprenticeship - https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship](https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship) (www.gov.uk)

Advanced higher and degree apprenticeships combine practical on-the-job skills training with off-the-job learning. This includes training that is relevant to a job and provides a salary.

Location: 80% of the time in the workplace and 20% off-the-job with some study in a college, training centre or Institute of Technology (IoT)

- Duration: A minimum of 1 year
- Entry requirements: Will be dependent on the industry, job role and apprenticeship level
- Qualifications: apprenticeship certificate, diploma, degree and masters depending on level
- Leads to: Work, next level of apprenticeship, further education, higher education

Find out more: www.apprenticeships.gov.uk

Use this search tool to find an apprenticeship:

<https://www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsearch>

You can input your post code, the level you wish to search and the area you wish to work in. **However** be aware that the title of the apprenticeship being offered by a firm might not be the same as we would use in school. Our advice is to **search all sectors** for a Level 3 (post A level standard) apprenticeship which will require a minimum of two A levels for entry.

Action planning:

List your choices below, finding out what entry requirements and deadlines are displayed for your preferences. Though you are not applying until Spring of 2024 you can see the process and the timeline. You need to plan ahead:

Description of apprenticeship:	Skills and Qualities needed:	Entry deadlines:

- Will you need work experience?
- Are you prepared to widen your search (10 miles, 25 miles) to find the best opportunities?
- What grades will serve you best?
- Do you need a career guidance appointment with our independent advisor?