



DISCOVER BECKY HIGH

Sixth



SIXTH FORM

UCAS AND FURTHER EDUCATION GUIDE

2024 - 2025

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Early applicant internal deadline, end of September

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Offers start to be received

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Offers continue to be received

UCAS application deadline, mid-January

UCAS 'Extra' opens in February for those not holding offers

Summer Term Year 13

May - UCAS applicants must have replied with firm and insurance choice

June - A level exams

August - Results Day; accept firm or insurance offers or go through clearing. Advice from Sixth Form team available on the day

Early Applicants

Some courses (Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Dentistry, Law) and some universities (Oxford and Cambridge) require UCAS applications to be submitted for an earlier deadline – around 15 October 2023. These also usually demand you take additional tests and/or attend an interview before making you an offer. Further information on these will be available to you if this is the path you are planning to take.

For these courses and institutions, it is particularly important that you have clear evidence of reading and researching beyond your A level subject specification and, where possible, have completed relevant work experience.

It is also advisable (though not essential) to consider submitting an early application for highly competitive courses such as Economics, English, History, Physiotherapy and Psychology.

Key Dates

31 st January 2024	UCAS and Futures Evening
6 th February 2024	Further Education and Futures Fair (FEFF) in school
3 rd June 2024	PSHE Futures Day
Mid-June 2024	Year 12 end of year exams

Introduction

The end of your school career is in sight, and you are about to begin a process of decision making which will have profound implications for your future. It is time to give serious thought to what you are going to do for the next three or four years and how you might make that happen.

Making these decisions can seem like a daunting process. Some of you will be clear about what you want to do and the path you want to follow, others of you will have no plans yet at all. However, there is plenty of help available for you both in school and online, and this guide will help you through each stage of the process.

It is important that you begin considering your options as early as possible; there are thousands of courses to choose from at hundreds of institutions and competition for the most popular ones is fierce. Do you want to go straight into work or university, do an apprenticeship or would you rather take a GAP year? Which type of institution would you like to attend? What subjects are you interested in studying further?

It is worth remembering also that your teachers' advice is extremely valuable in informing these decisions. At Beaconsfield High School we have a very strong record of successful university and apprenticeship applications, a carefully thought through timeline and excellent resources.

You will receive ongoing support throughout Year 12 and Year 13 and staff are always on hand for any queries you may have. Parents can also inform themselves about the UCAS (University and Colleges Admissions Service) by visiting www.ucas.com/parents.

Only one thing is certain: your time at Beaconsfield High school is nearly over. The most important thing, whatever you decide to do thereafter, is to start planning for that future.

Applying to University

Despite tuition fees and improved apprenticeship opportunities a university degree is still the first choice for most school leavers from selective institutions. There is much to be said for this route and, in fact, even if you are unsure, the process of applying allows you to focus on exactly what it is that you want, what you are interested in and how you see your future unfolding.

However, some students fail to complete their degrees and, whilst this can be for any number of reasons, the primary one remains that they are at the wrong place, doing the wrong course for them. Everyone has different needs, abilities, and ambitions. You need to be realistic, honest and, most importantly, conduct thorough research and listen to advice from those around you to inform this decision wisely.

If you choose to apply to university, you will do so through UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service), the central agency which handles almost 3 million applications to individual institutions each year. You may nominate up to 5 universities (fewer for some subjects, such as medicine) but you may only hold 2 offers through to examination results.

If you are to be successful, your choice must be made carefully and following detailed research and consultation. Planning is needed; there are three main decisions which should be taken in order:

WHICH SUBJECT – WHICH COURSE – WHICH UNIVERSITY?

Your teachers, form tutor and the Sixth Form Team are here to support and guide you through this process, but you will need to do a lot of individual research; no one can – or should - make these important decisions for you.

Which Subject?

Before you decide where you want to go to university you need to decide what you are going to study. Remember, you will be studying this subject for three years or more, so it is important to get it right. It's not easy; a vast array of choice exists – in the UK there are over 160 institutions offering more than 65 000 different courses. One of the main reasons students drop out of university is because they have chosen the wrong subject and, whilst it is sometimes possible to change subject once you are there, this is not commonplace.

There are three main ways to go about choosing your subject:

1. Choosing based on your A level subjects – you are already studying the subject, you know what it involves, you love it, you want to study it in more depth.
2. Choosing based on your career plans – you have clear career plans (eg. doctor, dentist, primary teacher) which require you to study a specific degree to access them.
3. Choosing based on another interest – you have a particular area of interest which really inspires you to research further (eg. architecture, Egyptology, forensic science).

If you genuinely have no idea, ask yourself first whether further education is really for you. The advantages of going to university 'just for the experience' are negligible. If the issue is that you have several areas of interest and cannot decide, try the following:

- Imagine you are marooned for several hours in a deserted airport departure lounge with nothing to entertain you except three Sunday newspapers. Which sections do you read first? What are you drawn to? Don't over think this. What was your gut response?

- Now, consider a similar scenario, although this time you find yourself in a well-resourced public library with internet as well (but no social media). What areas, sections, shelves, or websites would you be drawn to? Again, don't over think your response, just listen to your instinct.

Now do some research on courses related to the areas you are naturally drawn to. There will be courses which relate to and expand on your interests and preferences. Once you have narrowed your subject area you can start to look more closely at what that subject/those subjects might involve at undergraduate level.

Try searching on

[The Uni Guide](#)

[Unifrog](#) (Each student has a log in for this)

[UCAS](#)

[Complete Univeristy Guide](#)

Which Course?

Once you have settled on the subject or subject areas you are interested in, you should then investigate the courses on offer with a view to finding ones which particularly appeal. This requires a good deal of time and research as course can differ considerably in both approach, content, and methods of assessment.

Different types of courses explained

Essentially, there are eight types of courses:

- **Single Honours** – one subject is studied, within which a range of specialist options is provided. These courses usually have compulsory and optional modules.
- **Joint/Dual Honours** – two subjects are studied which may or may not be related. These courses mean being attached to two different faculties at the university. Your time will generally be divided 50:50 between faculties.
- **Major/Minor degrees:** There are also course which divide the subjects 75:25, 60:40. These courses tend to use the word 'with' rather than 'and' eg. Business AND French (would be split 50:50) but Business WITH French (split 75:25, or 60:40).
- **Combined Honours** – several or more subjects are studied which may or may not be related, often narrowing as the course progresses. Examples are combined science, combined arts.
- **Integrated Masters Degree** - These courses tend to have higher entry requirements, as they allow for automatic progress to postgraduate study provided you continue to receive suitable grades. They are often 4 years but may take longer if you add a year abroad or a year of work experience.
- **Sandwich Courses** (also known as Degrees with placement year) – Often last 4 years, with one year studying abroad or working in an industrial placement. The placement year comes in your 3rd year of study.
- **Interdisciplinary Course** – study of several subjects all related in a particular theme. An interdisciplinary course on Poverty could use Economics, Philosophy and Sociology as its three disciplines.
- **Foundation Degrees** (or a Foundation year)– These are full or part-time degrees directly linked to a specific area of work and the course concentrates on the skills and knowledge relevant to the workplace. Courses usually include assessed work experience and are highly vocational. Courses are generally two years long and here is usually the opportunity to transfer after a foundation degree onto an honours programme if you wish, dependent on outcome. There is also the opportunity to take a foundation year if you have not met the requirements of the course you wish to study or if you have not chosen the A level required to do the University degree. Foundation years are designed to develop the skills and subject-specific knowledge required to undertake a degree course and specialise in a subject area.
- **Degrees with a foundation year** - These courses allow students with lower grades to go to university and build their understanding of the subject they wish to study in the foundation year (also called Year 0). If you successfully complete your foundation year, you'll be able to move on to the first year of the regular bachelor's degree. As these courses add a year onto the start of your degree, they typically take four years to complete.
- **HNC/HND (Higher National Certificate)** - Typically takes one year to complete and is equivalent to the first year of a bachelor's degree. A **HND (Higher National Diploma)** is normally a two-year qualification and is equivalent to the

first two years of bachelor's level study. These courses are usually practically-based and aim to prepare you to go straight into the world of work.

- **Modular Courses** – You choose modules from different subjects, building your own course within specific pathways with the help and approval of a course tutor. You are likely to be assessed after each module in this type of degree and credits build up to a single, joint or combined honours degree. Not many universities offer truly modular degrees and those that do have highly competitive entry requirements.
- **Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme (CATS)** - Enables academic credit (or 'CATS points') to be transferred between higher education institutions. You study different modules in different institutions, ultimately building up to a degree or diploma. Although an institution may accept and 'count in' transferred credit, students have no automatic entitlement to this. Admissions decisions, including any exemption from part of a programme, will depend on the institution's rules. If you are considering transferring your CATS points, you should check this with the institution directly.

Bear in mind also that courses with the same or a very similar name can vary hugely from university to university. Do not assume that Economics, for example, will be the same everywhere; Medicine at Oxford is very unlike Medicine at Manchester; History at Cambridge very different from History at York.

Look at differences between courses in term of:

- **Course content/choice within the course** – how much is compulsory and how much optional? In language courses, for example, how much is literature, how much language?
- **Contact time with tutors** – some departments will have academic mentoring via one-on one tutorials, others larger seminar groups.
- **How the course is taught** – what will your 'timetable' look like? How often are lectures, seminars, practicals, personal research? How and how often is marking and feedback given? Most universities offer the opportunity for you to chat to a current student.
- **Quality of teaching** – universities have league tables just like schools do. These can be useful but bear in mind universities submit their own data and, as we all know, data can be manipulated in any number of different ways to produce favourable outcomes. The best way to find out about the quality of teaching in a given area is to talk to recent or current students. Use Open Days for this or ask one of the Sixth Form Team to put you in touch with former Beaconsfield High School students who have studied the course at the universities you are considering.
- **Amount of Private Study time** – some courses demand attendance at several lectures a day, some only a couple a week with the rest of the time dedicated to private study. Be honest with yourself. What will suit you?
- **Methods of assessment** – some courses rely exclusively on terminal exams; some have elements of coursework or fieldwork. For some courses your outcomes at the end of each year count towards your final degree, at others they don't. Assess your own work ethic honestly and recognise the conditions under which you do well.
- **Length of degree** – most courses are three years, but some are much longer (medicine, veterinary science and dentistry) as are languages and, increasingly, engineering and courses with a practical element. Likewise, courses at Scottish universities are usually four-year masters courses. Make sure you have checked how long the course lasts before applying.

Why not take advantage of this. [Chat to uni students via UCAS website](#), [Chat with Cambridge student](#), [Chat to Oxford Student](#)

Finally, though perhaps most importantly, the most important consideration when choosing a degree course is whether you have a decent chance of getting onto it. This consideration is, of course, linked directly with your choice of university also. You can read Geography, for example, at almost every university in the country, but grades to read it will range from A*AA at Cambridge to 104-120 UMS points at Bournemouth (BBB - BCC).

Universities publish their standard offer grades, and in most cases, you are unlikely to receive an offer from them unless you are predicted at least these entry requirement grades or above. Being aspirational is good but being realistic is also paramount if you are not to be disappointed.

Which University?

To some extent, your choice of subject will affect which universities you consider; not all universities run all subjects. Likewise, there is a wide variation in terms of the detail of any given degree course.

In terms of the course, consider:

- What is the course content and does it interest you?
- How much choice is there or are all modules compulsory?
- How much contact time is there versus independent study?
- How will your work be assessed? Do you prefer summative exams or coursework?
- Does the course guarantee work experience or offer a year placement or abroad?
- Are scholarships available?
- Can you combine the course with another and, if so, in what ratio?
- How easy is it to change course once you have started?

Universities differ also not only in terms of size but also, most significantly, in terms of whether they are campus or not. This is often a primary consideration with advocates of both.

In terms of university, consider:

- How close do you want to be to home?
- Would you prefer a campus or town university?
- Would you prefer to be in halls of residence or in private, shared accommodation?
- Would you prefer your residence to be catered or self-catered?
- What does the university offer in terms of facilities?
- What clubs and societies are available for undergraduates.
- Is accommodation guaranteed for first year students.

Each university will have details of every course on their website and several also have virtual tours so you can get quite a good sense of the place without even visiting.

It is also important to be realistic about the universities you are looking at. The prestigious Russell Group universities demand very high grades and for most students it is important to have considered alternatives at the very least as a back-up.

[Uni guide](#)

[What Uni](#)

Oxbridge

Oxford and Cambridge rank among the leading universities in the world and securing a place at one of their colleges is no mean feat.

You will need to complete additional paperwork for an Oxbridge application as well as special tests (see below). These usually require some level of preparation, so it is important that you check in advance exactly what is required for your subject. Successful candidates are then invited to interview where evidence of reading beyond the A level syllabus will be required and challenged.

It is also worth remembering that Oxbridge usually requires candidates to have around eight GCSE grades scoring level 8/9.

[Applying to Oxbridge guide](#)

Medicine, Veterinary Medicine and Dentistry

Competition for Medicine, Veterinary Medicine and Dentistry is as strong as it is for Oxbridge and voluntary work and work experience are essential to securing a place. Most institutions also require additional tests to be completed also (see below).

It is paramount that you check which tests your chosen institutions require or you risk not being made an offer.

You can find out more on the [medic portal](#)

Law

Several universities (Birmingham, Bristol, Cambridge, Durham, Exeter, Glasgow, KCL, Nottingham, Oxford and UCL) now also require that applicants take aptitude tests so it is paramount that you research your chosen course very carefully.

You can find out more on the UCAS website [here](#)

Aptitude and Admission Tests

With recent changes in these tests, it is worth keeping up to date with the relevant information.

[Changes to admissions tests from 2023](#)

The BMAT is no longer running and students will be expected to sit the UCAT instead, although watch this space.

[Medic portal - BMAT scrapped, what next?](#)

Here is what you can expect:

- **Imperial** – fully switching to the UCAT
- **UCL** – fully switching to the UCAT
- **Lancaster** – likely switching to the UCAT
- **Brighton & Sussex** – likely switching to the UCAT

And what about Oxbridge? We can't yet say for certain what will happen with these two. Oxford and Cambridge might introduce their own tests as they already run in-house admissions tests for some subjects, or they could stick with the UCAT like other universities.

Details of the tests required by each institution can be found on their website under the relevant course.

For Cambridge Tests click [here](#).

For Oxford Tests click [here](#).

For UCAT click [here](#).

For LNAT click [here](#).

For MAT click [here](#).

For HAT click [here](#).

For ENGAA click [here](#).

For ELAT click [here](#).

For PAT click [here](#).

For NSAA click [here](#).

Visits and Open Days

The best way to get a sense of what you might be looking for and a feel for different universities is to visit a few of them for Open Days. These are held in the Summer and again in the Autumn. However, we recommend that you visit generally in Year 12 when your workload is less than in Year 13.

At Open Days you will be able to attend talks on what different courses involve, visit halls of residence and find out about student finance and other information relating to student life.

Many universities have Open Days on Saturday which, of course, would be the optimum time to attend, however, we do allow three days leave of absence to be taken to visit institutions you are interested in.

Alternatives to University

The past few years have seen a significant change to the landscape of higher and further education market. Whilst historically all the strongest students headed for university, this is no longer the case.

Perhaps the most obvious reason for this changing landscape is the tuition fees; the significant debt most students will leave university with (most calculate in the region of £60,000) means that many of them (and their parents) are looking for alternatives. Add to this the fact that in today's employment market huge numbers of graduates are working in non-graduate jobs, and the huge cost associated with going to university is suddenly much less attractive than it was even ten years ago.

The wide range of opportunities available to students at the age of 18 to go straight into employment is further increasing the number of school leavers who are choosing to bypass the university stage. With the government's Apprenticeship levy (introduced in April 2017) meaning that large companies have a responsibility to provide more apprenticeship opportunities, we will no doubt see the number of apprenticeships available increase still further.

Whilst there is still plenty to recommend a university education and remains the top choice for the vast majority of students at Beaconsfield High School, there is now a wide range of options. With most school leavers' programmes now offering students a degree or professional qualification alongside employment, students can 'earn while they learn'.

Of the many alternatives to university available, we have chosen to highlight three key opportunities: Degree Apprenticeships, The School Leavers' Programme and Sponsored Degrees.

Apprenticeships and Sponsored Degrees

A Degree Apprenticeship is a growing education route launched by the Government in 2015, bringing together the best of higher and vocational training. This option enables university study and the invaluable on-the-job training typical of an apprenticeship without having to cover the cost of tuition. Typically, it combines paid work with university study where all tuition fees are paid for.

The range of degree apprenticeships continues to grow and is becoming a viable route for some of the best sixth form students. Some of the Degree Apprenticeships on offer, include: Chartered Surveying, Electronic Systems Engineering, Aerospace Engineering, Aerospace Software Development, Defence Systems Engineering, Laboratory Science, Nuclear, Power Systems, Public Relations, Digital, Automotive Engineering, Investment Banking and Finance, and Construction.

Higher Apprenticeships are offered often in vocational roles and some solicitor and accountancy apprenticeships do not offer degrees but professional qualifications instead.

Some of the corporations include JP Morgan, Goldman Sachs, Dyson, PWC, British Aerospace, GSK, Barclays, UBS, Mars, NHS, RollsRoyce, L'Oréal etc

Sponsored degrees are offered by the military. <https://jobs.army.mod.uk/regular-army/what-you-get/bursaries-scholarships/>

More information can be found in the links below.

[Watch Degree Apprenticeships programme](#)

[Apprenticeships explained](#)

Government apprenticeship website [here](#)

UCAS Degree apprenticeship site, click [here](#).

ASK apprenticeship site, click [here](#)

Studying Abroad

Studying in the USA and Canada

America has some of the best universities in the world and offers a different style of degree course from universities in the UK. There is also more tutorial and discussion-based learning, rather than the predominantly lecture-based learning of UK universities. The other benefits are broadening your experiences, internationalising your CV and providing yourself with a valuable experience.

American universities normally offer a 'Liberal Arts' programme in general arts and sciences before students choose which area of study they will concentrate on. The main benefits are breadth and flexibility. Once a student has completed a specific number of courses, they are then awarded their degree. This usually takes four years. When applying, you can suggest your preferred 'major' but this is not necessary at the application stage, and students are free to change their minds at a later date. The 'liberal arts' option is therefore particularly beneficial for students who do not have one preferred subject or are not yet sure what they would like to focus on.

Applying to an American University

There is a notion that Ivy League universities are the only ones for which it is worth applying. However, there are hundreds of other very good universities in America. In fact, the Ivy League was set up purely as a sporting organisation for a few East Coast universities.

Choosing university thousands of miles away is difficult. You need to narrow your choices first, considering the course, accreditation of the university, cost, size, location etc., and then visit your selected list.

There is no UCAS service covering every university. However, [Unifrog](#) does have a comprehensive list and guide to assist you in your search.

The [Common Application](#) also covers most universities, but each institution will likely require an individual essay and extra application form. Many will also need you to sit additional entrance tests on application. These should be taken as early as possible (preferably during the summer) as the deadline for universities in America is often November or December of the year before you want to start.

If you are considering applying for an American or Canadian university, you should email the universities you are interested in and ask for prospectuses, financial information, and application forms. Make sure you keep in contact with them throughout the process. You must also ensure you advise the Sixth Form Team of your planned application well in advance so that we can ensure you get the necessary support with your application.

Your co-curricular activities are more important at American universities than they are in the UK. American universities are interested in your academic ability and interest, but also want to see how you will fit into their institution.

Finance studying in USA

Firstly, and perhaps most importantly, you should be aware that you cannot get a student loan from the UK to study abroad. Tuition fees vary depending on whether you applying to a state or private university. For example, Yale's tuition basic fees for 2022-23 were \$62,250. The key thing is to research what each individual university is charging, and what they require from you in order to apply for and be awarded a scholarship.

Living costs similarly vary depending on what university you choose to attend. Big cities are more expensive than more rural universities. Universities will usually send you a rough estimate of costs such as room, board, books, medical insurance (required) and personal expenses in the living costs figure they quote.

The main source of financial aid for international students, other than family resources, is the university to which you are applying. Most university financial aid is based on academic merit, although some institutions give funding based on need. Full scholarships covering total expenses are rare, although do exist. There are also athletic scholarships, arts scholarships and scholarships based on other criteria.

Alternatively, you can also contact a placement service, for example [College Prospects of America](#) (UK) to help find a scholarship.

Considerations

Applying to an American university is time consuming. Most of the work is done by the student, and you must be fully committed if you are going to embark on the process. Application costs are per university and can prove quite costly, so select carefully, the universities you wish to apply for.

Also, be aware of the international acceptance rate. In 2020-21, Yale's acceptance percentage was just 11% for international students.

The best source of information is available through the Fulbright Commission. For more information from their website click on the link below:

The Fulbright Commission

Studying in Europe

Some students choose to study in Europe, and this has proven attractive for a number of reasons, not least because several countries offer courses in English.

However, with the UK having left the EU it is important to do your research and contact the universities to find out more about the tuition fees they charge. Some fees are in line with the local students, whilst some have you paying the higher fee. For more information on studying in the EU, do refer to [Where to study in Europe](#). Here you will find out more about the universities and their tuition costs/scholarships.

A year's study in Europe: Erasmus

The Erasmus scheme has until now given you the opportunity to do one term or one year of your degree abroad, whether that is a language degree or not. Do click on the link to find out more about this program [Erasmus](#).

Benefits of Erasmus include improving your language skills, extending your network of contacts, developing your employment potential and increased resilience as a result of living and working outside of your comfort zone. You will also gain qualifications which will be recognised outside of your native country but possibly elsewhere also.

Language requirements

Some universities will require you to have an A Level or AS Level in the national language or require you to learn the language once you arrive. However, many universities offer courses in English, and thus to attend the university there will be no requirement to speak that language.

Accommodation

It depends on the institution whether accommodation is arranged for you in advance of your arrival. It is a key question that you should ask your prospective university. If accommodation is not guaranteed you should check what advice and assistance is available from the university or student welfare bodies.

Finance

As previously stated, fees at many European institutions are likely to increase as UK nationals are categorised as non-EU Members, unless the choice of individual membership confers a lower EU fee status. However, scholarships are also available. At Maastricht, for example, the top 3% study for free, and there are sports and other scholarships available. A variety of grants are also available.

Considerations

It is important to weigh up the benefits and the costs of studying abroad. Whilst it is a great opportunity it is not for everyone. Make sure you consider all the different options carefully.

For more information about studying in Europe click on the links below:

[Study in Europe](#)

[British Council - Study and work abroad](#)

Studying in other British Speaking Countries

Other popular options for studying abroad are Ireland, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, all of which have a number of good options of universities. Some universities have also created satellite campuses in other parts of the world. For example, New York University has a campus in Abu Dhabi. This gives students the chance to travel to other parts of the world and experience other cultures, whilst still studying for a meaningful degree.

Ireland is a useful option for being nearby and has a number of good universities. It follows a different application system to that of the UK, with offers being made after results are released, not before. The [Central Applications Office](#) provides details about this process as well as deadlines.

Australia and New Zealand are particularly attractive options because of the similarities between their university systems and those in the UK up until university, making the transition easier. They also offer a broader degree, similar to the liberal arts adopted by American universities and becoming increasingly popular at UK universities. Studying in these areas is seen as beneficial as it gives students an opportunity to travel.

Finance

If you choose to study abroad, the loans and grants available in the UK are not available to you and studying abroad tends to be more expensive than remaining in the UK. However, there are scholarships available: this requires students to do their own research and question individual universities about what is on offer.

Considerations

The application dates and systems for these universities are different from those in the UK. It is important that students do their own research and are on top of their own application. If you are considering applying for one of these universities, please ensure you inform the Sixth Form Team who will support your application as far as possible.

For more information about studying in one of these countries, click on the links below:

[Study Options](#)

[Study in Australia or New Zealand where to study](#)

Student Finance (Studying in the UK, as a UK citizen)

As a student, you will have to pay for two things:

- Tuition fees for your course
- Living costs, such as rent, food, books, transport and entertainment.

Loans are available to cover the cost of tuition fees for all students and living costs for some students.

Tuition Fees

For 2024 entry Universities and colleges in the UK can charge new students up to £9,250 a year for their courses, however fees in Wales remain at £9,000 a year. Amounts charged may vary between courses, as well as between different universities and colleges. However, this money does not have to be paid whilst you are studying. You will be able to take out a student loan to cover the tuition fees charged by your university or college.

Scotland

Although there are no tuition fees for Scottish students attending Scottish universities, as the situation stands English students will still have to pay up to £9,250 p.a. to study in Scotland.

Living Costs

These vary on lifestyle. Accommodation in university halls of residence will vary with institution but in Bristol, for example, you will pay approx. 5k per annum for self-catered accommodation and 8k for catered in university halls of residence. Living out is cheaper, although most students do this in their second and third years rather than their first.

Loans, Fees and Grants

Student finance support

Please note that you will need to complete a student finance application even if your intention is not to take a loan. This is to ensure that you do not end up paying the full cost of your fees which in most cases are more than £9,250 per year (£9,000 in Wales). The table below gives an indication of the maximum amount of financial help.

- Tuition Fee Loan up to £9,250 (Wales: £9,000)
- Maintenance Loan for living per annum; up to £12,010 if studying in London, up to £9,203 if studying outside of London and up to £7,747 if living at home and studying.
- The loans for fees and living costs are rolled into one (i.e. one monthly repayment and statement).
- The loan is repayable from April the year after you leave your course and if your income is above the repayment threshold.

For more details on Student loans and repaying these, please refer to the government website [here](#)

More information on student loans can be found [here](#)

Bursaries and Scholarships

There is an emerging market in bursaries.

Some Universities, and some courses, will offer bursaries and scholarships, not always means tested, to attract students. A website has been set up: <https://www.thescholarshipclub.org.uk/> This summarises all the scholarships and bursaries available at UK universities for UK students, so is worth a look. There are a number of sports scholarships available as well as academic scholarships for those who exceed the grade requirements at their chosen university (this is particularly common in Scotland).

Often, universities reward bursaries or scholarships if you exceed their basic entry requirement, often by two grades. Therefore, it can be difficult for students to be awarded bursaries or scholarships by the very top universities, asking for AAA entry requirements to start with.

It is important to check out scholarship and bursaries at an early stage, as they are likely to be highly competitive.

Course-search on UCAS not only brings up entry requirements, but also details of bursaries and scholarships. <https://www.ucas.com/finance/scholarships-grants-and-bursaries>

Companies are also setting up scholarship programmes. BP, for example, has a scholarship programme for students studying STEM subjects at nine top universities, which students can apply to during their first term at university. This would be £3000 per year starting from your second year. [BP scholarships](#) Other companies will also be running similar schemes, so it is worthwhile students keeping their eyes open as to the opportunities that are available.

Useful Websites

Student Finance: the first people to check out if you have any questions:

Student Finance England, including applications for loans and grants: 0300 100 0607 or [Government Student finance](#).

Making a UCAS Application

You will need to be thinking about your UCAS application well in advance of making it. A successful applicant will have done thorough research about courses and institutions in Year 12, be able to demonstrate evidence of wider reading around and knowledge of the subject they are applying for.

Getting Set Up

You will have opportunity to set yourself up on the UCAS during a dropdown day in the Summer Term. You will be given time to enter basic details, including GCSE results, as well as guidance on filling in other areas of the application. Students have already been given login details for Unifrog, and should be already doing research on this, using the READ, WATCH, LISTEN tab to look for a MOOC of interest to them and accessing wider reading (lists found on Unifrog/University websites), in order to make their application stand out above others.

Enrichment

One of the main things that will set you apart from your counterparts in terms of your application is the extent to which you can demonstrate an academic interest in your chosen subject above and beyond that which is required as part of your A Level studies. Any lectures you have attended, talks you have been to, books or articles you have read can all be referenced in your personal statement and/or at any interviews you attend. On Unifrog there is an area where you can keep all this information, ready for when you write your personal statement.

Staying abreast of any new related material to your subject area is always important and subject staff will provide a list of recommended extra reading for their subject areas. MOOCs are another great way of extending your understanding and broadening your perspective.

In school, we have many talks arranged, usually through the various clubs and societies, which offer you the opportunity to hear a wide variety of speakers talking about all kind of different things. Remember, no learning is ever wasted. The further you move away from the 'Do I have to know this for the exam?' mentality, the more successful you are likely to be at undergraduate level.

Personal Statements

Your personal statement is the single most important part of your application. It is not something you can produce quickly or without thought and preparation. You will need to draft it several times and it will require input from subject specialist staff as well as your form tutor.

There is a great deal of support available to you for this task. The Year 12 dropdown day in May will have some part of it dedicated to this part of your university application. You will have a talk from an experienced London University admissions tutor and you will then have time to start to plan and draft your statement under the supervision of experienced staff. By the time you submit your final statement it will have been through the hands of subject staff, your form tutor and one of the Sixth Form Team. The precise process will be shared with you during the course of the UCAS day in June.

Several universities have advice on their websites about how to write a personal statement. Alternatively, try the UCAS website: [How to Write a UCAS Undergraduate Personal Statement](#). We also offer support for this throughout the application process.

UCAS Application Personal Checklist

The table below helps you identify some of the areas you should already be working on before starting your application.

What to do	Checklist (DONE)
I have decided what subject I want to study	
I have researched courses related to it	
I have researched different universities	
I have checked the entry requirements for the courses I am interested in	

I have been to at least two university Open Days	
I have completed at least one MOOC	
I have read at least one book/article from this subject's wider reading list	
I have watched at least one talk/lecture/documentary relating to my subject	
I have read about/watched a video on how to write a personal statement	
I have done Work Experience	

Overview of the Process

Timeline at BHS

Autumn Term Year 12

- Unifrog – students start to do wider reading, MOOCs
- Enrichment events – students attend Enrichment talks
- Work experience
- University research starts

Spring Term Year 12

- UCAS and Futures Information Evening
- Further Education and Futures Fair (in school)
- University Open Day visits encouraged

Summer Term Year 12

- End of Year 12 Exams
- Predicted grades issued
- UCAS and Futures Dropdown Day
- Students register on UCAS 'Apply'
- Draft application completed by early applicants
- University Open Day visits encouraged

Autumn Term Year 13

- Early applicant internal deadline, end of September .
- UCAS early applicant deadline Mid October.
- Other applicant internal deadline, end of October.
- Applications sent to UCAS.
- Offers start to be received.

Spring Term Year 13

- Offers continue to be received.
- UCAS application deadline, mid-January.
- UCAS 'Extra' opens in February for those not holding offers.

Summer Term Year 13

- May - UCAS applicants must have replied with firm and insurance choice.
- June - A Level exams.
- August - Results Day; accept firm or insurance offers or go through clearing. Advice from Sixth Form team available on the day.

Early Applicants

Some courses (Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Dentistry, Law) and some universities (Oxford and Cambridge) require UCAS applications to be submitted for an earlier deadline. These also usually demand you take additional tests and/or attend an interview before making you an offer. Further information on these will be available to you if this is the path you are planning to take.

For these courses and institutions, it is particularly important that you have clear evidence of reading and researching beyond you're a-Level subject specifications and, where possible, have completed relevant work experience. Some conservatoires such as Music courses also has an earlier deadline.

It is also advisable (though not essential) to consider submitting an early application for highly competitive courses such as Economics, English, History, Physiotherapy and Psychology.

Summary of all the Useful websites mentioned in the above handbook.

[The Uni Guide](#)

[Unifrog](#) (your child has a log in for this)

[UCAS](#)

[Complete University Guide](#)

[UCAS guide for parents](#)

[Applying to Oxbridge guide](#)

[Common Application](#)

[University sponsorship company](#)

[Sponsored Degrees – A Guide](#)

[Oxbridge admission tests](#)

[College Prospects of America](#)