

Herschel Grammar School



Academic Success and Personal Responsibility within a Caring Environment

Guide to University Application

M Bourne / T Gumbs June 18

Helping you get into Higher Education - Part 1

Stage 1: Research

- a) What should I study?
- b) Where should I study?
- c) Should I take a gap year?

a) What should I study?

- Consider your **interests/ passions** - pick the *subject* first then think about the course, then the university
- Consider your strengths and the skills you wish to develop
- Be **realistic** about entry requirements (subjects/grades) - ask your teachers
- Ask your teachers/Sixth Form team pastoral team/ careers advisers
- Consider future **career plans/ prospects** - try the UCAS **buzz quiz** to learn more about yourself. www.ucas.com/buzz-quiz
- Do your **research** e.g. teaching methods, style of assessment, content, type of course (combined, sandwich, modular, joint honours)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION -

- www.ucas.com - use the UCAS Search Tool to check course content for 2018 entry. See Entry Profiles.
- See the [careers section on the school website](#) for lots of useful links
- Attend a Taster Course
- Look at <http://www.ukcoursefinder.com/>
- See the book "What do Graduates Do?" (copy in the Study Room).
- Useful careers websites - <http://icould.com/> and <http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/degreein.htm>

b) Where should I study?

Choices

- big university or small university? campus university or city-based?
 - near home or far away?
 - quality of facilities - library/IT/sports
 - accommodation provided? quality/ cost?
 - cost of living?
 - bursaries available?
 - reputation/popularity? applications per place? - see appendix for list of popular/ prestigious universities
- You can apply for up to 5 courses (4 for dentistry/medicine/veterinary)
 - List your priorities and do some research

SOURCES OF INFORMATION -

- Visit - no better way of making a decision. Attend an Open Day - www.opendays.com. Book early to avoid disappointment and go on Saturday where possible.
- Use information from the UCAS Exhibition at Brunel
- Look at league tables (see below) - though treat with some caution
- <http://unistats.direct.gov.uk/> - allows you to compare courses and students' opinions
- Look at prospectuses and alternative prospectuses - see university websites
- Advice books in the Study Room - see Appendix
- Interested in Oxbridge? You can only apply to Oxford OR Cambridge. See Mrs Gumbs for an information booklet. Look at www.oxbridge-admissions.info - it contains insider knowledge about Oxbridge admissions
- See the [careers section on the school website](#) for lots of useful links

c) A Gap Year? Don't rule it out

- Travel? Work Experience? Voluntary Work?
- Universities and employers will be impressed if you do something worthwhile
- You can still apply this year - apply for "deferred entry"
- A valuable way to gain confidence and independence before going to university
- Comment on your plans in your personal statement
- Look on the [careers section on the school website](#) for lots of weblinks to help you plan a Gap Year (leaflets available from Study Room)

Stage 2: Application

- This application is one of the most important you will ever make so you need to take time and care over it. It needs to be high on your list of priorities.
- Applying early will increase your chances of getting an offer
- All applications are made through UCAS and the form is completed on-line. The application system is called "Apply"!
- The key website is: www.ucas.com
- Watch the *How to Apply* video (and many other useful videos) at www.ucas.tv

Completing your application - The Idiot's Guide!

A) Getting started: Registering

- 1) Log on to the website www.ucas.com
- 2) Click the "Register" icon in the top right-hand corner and choose "undergraduate registration"
- 3) Click on Register and Apply for 2019 entry. Click on Register
- 4) Follow the instructions on-line - when asked, say you are applying through the school. You need to know that the school's **buzzword** is: MRS GUMBS
- 5) **Make a note of your username and password which you will need every time you login.** Record your Personal ID when this is displayed.

B) Filling in your details

- 1) Via the website www.ucas.com enter your username and password
- 2) Fill in the details in the following areas:
 - a) **Personal Details** - email address (make it a sensible one!), Fee code: (02/relevant local authority)
 - b) **Choices** - Your choices of courses/institutions (up to 5)
 - c) **Education** - schools you have attended; qualifications SEE BELOW
 - d) **Employment** - details of recent employers (if any)
 - e) **Statement** - Personal statement - see resources on O drive/ website

CLICK ON SAVE TO KEEP CHANGES

EDUCTAION: Entering your academic qualifications - IMPORTANT POINTS!!

- 1) Enter GCSE grades for all subjects taken
- 2) You also need to enter the subjects you are taking as A Levels, stating the grades as "**pending**". You do this under the heading "GCE Advanced Level". You may also choose to enter details of the modules you are taking (also to be shown as pending).
- 3) Any other qualifications that are certificated or pending also need to be included e.g. **EPQ/Duke of Edinburgh/Dance/Drama/Music/AS Levels**.

Key Dates

2018

- June-August: Research options and begin to complete UCAS form
Begin work on your PERSONAL STATEMENT.
- September-October: Complete UCAS form, including personal statement. Click "Send to referee" and pay £24 - this sends the form to CSP/MPJ/CSP
- End of September: Herschel deadline for applications for Oxford/Cambridge, medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, veterinary science to be completed/ submitted
- 15 October: Herschel deadline for all applications
- MPJ/CSP/MBO will write and attach a reference before your form is sent.
- November onwards - universities make offers of places. You can monitor the progress of your application on "Track".

2019

- 15 January: Final UCAS deadline for all UCAS applications
- 25 February: Start of Extra (for those with no offers)
- By May: Confirm firm and insurance choices and complete Student Finance
- 15 August: Results Day: Place confirmed on Track (hopefully!). Clearing vacancies published. Adjustment opens.

Useful student finance websites:

<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/UniversityAndHigherEducation/StudentFinance/index.htm>

<http://www.moneysavingexpert.com/students/>

APPENDIX

A) Books and Prospectuses

These are all available in the Careers Library or from Mrs Gumbs

Choosing your Degree Course and University: Brian Heap

Arranged by subject, this gives brief descriptions of what's on offer at different universities. Also offers suggestions as to what courses you could do based on your A level subjects or the career you may be interested in.

Degree Course Offers: Brian Heap

Updated every year, this has course information and grade requirements. These are for general guidance only, but you will get an idea of where it's worth applying to based on your AS grades and A2 predicted grades.

Getting Into Oxford and Cambridge: Sarah Alakija

Written by Oxbridge graduates, this book describes what these Universities are like, how to choose the right college and how to maximise your chances of getting an interview. Also includes some sample questions.

Student Book

Updated every year, this has info on all universities and includes useful lists of where particular subjects are taught. Also lists the best research universities and which take the most students from state schools.

The Times Good University Guide

Updated every year. Lists top universities by subject and describes them. There's no information on combined or unusual courses. Bear in mind newspapers such as the *Guardian* and *Independent* also rank universities and their results may be different. The *Guardian* produces a similar guide.

University Scholarships and Awards: Brian Heap

Lists universities and what financial help they offer.

PROSPECTUSES: University prospectuses are available in the Study area. Please return them to the correct boxes so that everybody can find what they need.

B) UCAS APPLICATIONS GRADES / POINTS INFORMATION

University offers may be stated as **grades** (e.g. AAB) or they the offer may be conditional on a certain number of "**UCAS Points**" - see below:

Grade	A Level	AS Level	EPQ
A*	56		28
A	48	20	24
B	40	16	20
C	32	12	16
D	24	10	12
E	16	6	8

Some other qualifications e.g. music examinations also qualify for UCAS points.

In terms of UCAS points **AS Levels are worth 40% of a full A Level**. EPQ is worth **50%** of a full A Level

C) IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR LAW, MEDICAL, VETERINARY SCIENCE AND OXBRIDGE STUDENTS

Several universities now require candidates for law, medicine and veterinary science to have passed extra tests before they will consider your application.

SOME OF THESE TESTS ARE TAKEN AT SCHOOL BUT YOU WILL NOT BE ENTERED FOR THESE TESTS AUTOMATICALLY - LIAISE WITH MRS GUMBS IN SEPTEMBER!

Law

You may be required to have passed the National Admissions Test for Law (known as **LNAT**). Currently there are eight universities asking for this extra qualification - for details and more information about the test look at the website www.lnat.ac.uk

You need to arrange to take this yourself and pay the fee of £50 by debit / credit card before you take the test (fee subject to change).

Medicine and Veterinary Science

You may be required to have passed the BioMedical Admissions Test (known as **BMAT**). Currently there are seven universities asking for this extra qualification - for details and more information about the test look at the website

www.admissionstests.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/adt/bmat

Ask Mrs Gumbs to arrange for you to take the test at school in November - you will not be entered automatically. The cost is £45.00 plus an admin fee (fee subject to change).

You can avoid having to take this test by applying to universities that do not require it!

Most universities now require that you sit the UKCAT test. You will have to arrange this yourself. See www.ukcat.ac.uk and ask Mrs Gumbs for details. The cost of this is £65 if the test is taken before 31 August (£87 afterwards).

Oxbridge

Check with Mrs Gumbs whether your chosen course/college requires an extra test. These tests are usually sat at school but it is **YOUR responsibility to ensure you are entered** - liaise with Mrs Gumbs/ Mr Schroder in September.

D) LEAGUE TABLES

	Complete University Guide - 2019	Guardian League Table - 2019
1	Cambridge	Cambridge
2	Oxford	Oxford
3	LSE	St Andrews
4	Imperial	Loughborough
5	St Andrews	Durham
6	Durham	Bath
7	Loughborough	Imperial
8	Lancaster	Warwick
9	Warwick	Lancaster
10	UCL	Leeds
11	Bath	UCL
12	Exeter	York
13	Leeds	Coventry
14	East Anglia (UEA)	Exeter
15	Bristol	LSE
16	Birmingham	Nottingham Trent
17	Nottingham	Nottingham
18	Manchester	UEA
19	Surrey	Birmingham
20	Southampton	Bristol
	BOTTOM 5	BOTTOM 5
	Wrexham Glyndwr	London Metropolitan
	Suffolk	Cumbria
	Wolverhampton	York St John
	Plymouth Marjon	Leeds Beckett
	London Metropolitan	Bucks New University

See this document on the school careers website for links below to work. They give full listings of all universities and further breakdown:

- 1) Click [here](#) for the COMPLETE UNIVERSITY GUIDE
- 2) Click [here](#) for the GUARDIAN LEAGUE TABLE

Use league tables with **caution**. Look at the subject and university ranking over 3-4 years and take an average of both over the period. Often a lower ranked institution can be excellent for a particular course and in most cases a 'good' sandwich placement is worth far more than a small difference in the league table ranking.

E) UNIVERSITY REPUTATIONS

Reputations matter and the best universities are often considered to be the 24 **Russell Group** universities. (However they are not necessarily the best place for your course!):

Cambridge, Oxford, LSE, Imperial, Durham, Warwick, UCL, Bristol, York, Exeter, Southampton, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Kings, Nottingham, Leeds, Cardiff, Queen Mary, Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Queens-Belfast, Sheffield.

There's more to life than the Russell Group! Be aware that there are many prestigious institutions and courses not listed in the list above - do your research carefully,

F) ALTERNATIVES TO THE UCAS FORM

- Try this site! <https://www.notgoingtouni.co.uk/>
- **Apprenticeships** - www.getingofar.gov.uk
- **Volunteering** e.g. www.step-together.org.uk/
- **Start a business** - advice on www.princes-trust.org.uk and www.gov.uk/starting-up-a-business
- **Get a job** - Prepare a CV and register with on-line job sites such as www.gov.uk/jobsearch. Keep an eye on local press and employers' websites]
- **Study abroad** - various websites including: <http://www.astarfuture.co.uk/>

NOTES: