



The Dixie Grammar

Senior School

UCAS

2023

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Introduction

While you are in the Sixth Form, apart from the effort required to work for your A Level examinations, there are some important decisions to be made about what to do post-Dixie and this necessitates research and self-analysis. The aim of this booklet is to help you make informed choices.

Questions to consider

- Do I want to go into Higher Education or seek a job/apprenticeship?
- How do I decide which Universities to consider?
- What subject should I study?
- Should I take a Gap Year or apply for deferred entry and will this affect my application?
- Who will pay for me to go to University?
- What is a degree apprenticeship?
- How do I give myself the best chance of success with my application?

Options:

University or college:

- Gain valuable skills
- Traditional, highly-respected route
- Gain a qualification to help you follow your chosen career - even if you're not yet sure what that might be
- Study a subject you find interesting in greater depth
- University is an enjoyable and rewarding experience in itself

Higher Level Apprenticeship:

- Gain the skills and experience you need for many careers
- Study for work-based learning qualifications and in some instances towards a foundation, full bachelor's or master's degree as part of the apprenticeship.
- Work towards a professional qualification in your field alongside experienced colleagues.
- Build up practical work experience whilst progressing academically.
- Be paid as you work.

Degree Apprenticeship:

- Gain the skills and experience needed for a specific career
- Enables you to gain a full undergraduate or master's degree while you work
- Available in a wide variety of industries, but the best are very competitive
- Real life work experience – and a salary

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- The costs of your degree are covered

Taking a job straight away:

- Start developing essential skills and experience while increasing your employability
- Earn money immediately
- Going straight into work gets you onto the first step of your career, builds your confidence, gives you experience, and allows you to meet new people

This guide is primarily about the UCAS (university) application process, but advice on alternatives is always available. When you are in the Lower Sixth, you are unlikely to be absolutely sure about your career goals – this is why it is important to find out as much information as you can about your options.

Choosing a Course

When you come to fill in your UCAS Application you will see that you can choose up to five courses; you can apply to fewer than this, but most students use all of their available options because it maximises their chances of success.

Research your ideal subject, type of course, and study location: the important thing is to choose a subject you will enjoy that will help you reach your goals. Think about what you enjoy doing day-to-day - maybe this could be part of a future career.

After getting started with what to study, entry requirements and application deadlines, you might still find a large number of courses to choose from around the country. Browsing through the search tool at www.ucas.com is invaluable and you should also aim to visit universities to see what they are like.

Each course will vary in learning styles, assessment methods and topics studied and you will usually get to choose some of the modules you take.

Undergraduate degrees usually last three or four years beginning in September/October and are known as a bachelor's or first degree. Students will usually choose one subject, although some opt for a joint honours degree (50/50). Some degree courses will offer work experience or 'sandwich courses', during which you work for a year in a relevant industry.

Once decided, your five choices should ideally all be in the same subject area, or it will appear to Admissions Tutors in your Personal Statement that you are either terminally indecisive or not committed to their course - neither are desirable traits! **In the case of Medicine**, only four of the five choices can be for medical courses; the remaining one is your 'insurance' choice (usually in a related subject such as Biomedical Science) in case you do not get a place at medical school or fail to get the required grades.

Remember that few degree courses are going to commit you to a particular career. Nearly all professions require further study and qualifications or experience 'on the job'. If you are one of the lucky students who has a clear idea about which subject you wish to study, then your decisions will be much more straightforward. If, however, you are undecided about future degree and career preferences, then consider choosing a degree which leaves your options as open as possible.

You should also make full use of the UCAS search tool and university web sites.

Research cannot be rushed or skimped. If you do, you stand the chance of ending up studying a course, which is not right for you. Think about:

- Which modules are the most interesting and relevant to your career aspirations?
- How many lectures are there and how much group work will be done in seminars?
- What combination of exams, coursework or presentations is the course assessed by?

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- Who are the tutors and are they experts in areas you want to learn about?

'When choosing a course, remember that not all courses with the same name are identical.'

Rachel Lister, Head of Admissions, Cambridge University

Choosing a University

Many students and parents become very anxious about whether a particular University is sufficiently highly thought of. However, the most important thing is matching your individual goals with the course and the institution. Finding the right university is about more than league tables.

Some students become fixated on going to a 'Russell Group' university. The Russell Group is simply a self-selecting group of leading research universities (i.e. their reputation is based on the quality of the research that their academics publish) and named after the Hotel Russell where their vice chancellors originally met. These twenty-four universities are certainly prestigious, but it does not mean that other universities are necessarily 'lesser' – especially when it comes to the quality of their teaching, as opposed to their original research. Many other universities have outstanding, even world-leading, reputations in specific disciplines: for example, if you want to study Sport, Loughborough's reputation is excellent and Nottingham Trent's Business School is extremely competitive and very highly regarded. Neither are Russell Group universities.

There are a number of ways in which you can research universities – read their prospectuses and/or websites and visit them on Open Days to ask, for example, the following questions

- What subject areas do they specialise in?
- Can you study abroad or get help with work placements?
- Do they have sports facilities or societies you would want to join?
- How near home, a city centre or the countryside are they?

One other difference you should be aware of is that of 'campus' and 'city' universities. A campus university, such as York or Warwick, is a self-contained student community set in the outskirts of an urban area. This is very different from a city university, such as London, Leeds or Manchester, where Departments and Halls are located throughout the city and can be spread out over quite a large area. Both types have their fans; you must decide which is right for you. Sometimes, the cost of living at the city universities can be higher and this is another consideration to bear in mind. You also need to think about whether you wish to be close to home or far away. Both have their advantages and disadvantages, personally and practically.

Student accommodation is also an important consideration and we would urge all applicants to check carefully to ensure that first year students are guaranteed places in reasonably priced, university-owned halls or flats. Renting from a private landlord is an expensive and frequently unsatisfactory arrangement - particularly in your first year when you are unfamiliar with the area.

Oxford and Cambridge (Oxbridge) are part of the UCAS system and you can only apply to one of the two. You may have entrance papers to sit followed by an interview and in some cases be required to send examples of your written work with your application. Competition for places is intense and Admissions Tutors are looking for a combination of excellent predicted grades alongside impressive past academic performance. Originality of thought, initiative, commitment and the ability to think above and beyond your A Levels are prerequisites, as is the resilience to cope with a demanding and pressured environment.

Those considering applying to Oxbridge or highly competitive courses such as Medicine, Veterinary Science and Dentistry will require predicted grades of A*/A and will be given specifically tailored guidance and support.

The *most* important consideration is that **you** choose a course and institution which you like and where you feel you will be happy. Listen carefully to advice and guidance from parents and tutors, but this is ultimately **your** decision – a frequent reason that students ‘drop out’ is that they choose a course or institution that they hadn’t fully researched or were too influenced by others’ opinions.

Remember:

The only 'correct' decision is the one which is right for you.

The only way to be as sure as possible that you have made the right decision is to:

- research all the institutions and courses in which you are interested. This takes time!
- ask for advice from Sixth Form tutors, subject teachers and the UCAS team.
- visit the university.
- leave yourself time to reflect on any decisions you have provisionally made. Are you still as keen and excited about it a month later?
- only choose a course which you think you will enjoy.
- It is also vitally important that you thoroughly check entry requirements for the course for which you are applying and are honest with yourself about whether these are realistic grades for you.

The UCAS Process

The UCAS website opens for the next year's applicants in May - you will have an Enrichment session in which we take you through the registration process and you can begin completing the application form.

Applications for Medicine, Veterinary Science and Dentistry should be sent off early in the Autumn Term, as should those to Oxbridge - the deadline for submission is **15 October**. The final deadline for all other applications is **15 January** - forms received later than this are still considered, but **only** where places remain available.

You can speed up the process of completing your application by some preparatory work during the summer. First of all, do **plenty of research**; narrow down your choices of course and university so that you have given yourself time to mull over the various possibilities and a final decision can be made more easily in September. Secondly, find your IGCSE/GCSE certificates (and any others that will be needed e.g. music certificates) and make a note of the grade and **examination board** for each subject – finding this information before filling in the UCAS Application often saves a lot of time. Finally, make a plan or rough draft of your personal statement using the information gathered during the previous summer term ready to email to the Head of Sixth Form at the beginning of the autumn term.

My advice would be to apply as soon as you are sure of your course and institution choices. Leaving it until January causes considerable extra stress when you should be focusing on your A Levels and Mock exams.

Predicted Grades

In the latter stages of the Summer Term of your Lower Sixth Year, provisional predicted grades will be provided by subject teachers and the Head of Sixth Form will meet with you individually to discuss these. Predicted grades will be based on your work and progress throughout your Lower Sixth year, not just performance in the Lower Sixth end of year examinations.

Your predicted grades should help to guide you in your choices and match your own likely outcomes to the standard offers made by universities. Depending on course provider benchmarks and applicant numbers, these standard offers can occasionally change from the initial recommendations. It is always a good idea therefore to apply to courses with higher and lower requirements so you will have different options.

The best strategy is to aim as high as is reasonable, but make sure you always include some courses which have lower requirements as 'insurance'.

The Personal Statement

Your personal statement is the most time-consuming aspect of the application process and it is likely that you will need to complete several drafts before you are ready to submit your application.

Be warned: This is the most difficult aspect of the application process and it is vital that serious and detailed consideration is given to its preparation before September. If you discover in September that you have no interesting activities or experiences to talk about in your Personal Statement, **it is too late to put it right!** Think **now** about what you have to offer universities as a person. Do you need to contribute to the School in some way? Have you arranged to take part in a volunteer programme? Have you attended relevant 'taster' courses or followed up some course-related activity? Have you taken part in some sporting activity? Have you undertaken wider reading beyond your A Level course? Have you done anything which will make your application stand out from others?

Workshops providing guidance about what to include in the statement take place in the Summer Term and guidance will be given to help you to improve what you have written so that you present yourself in the best possible light. However, it is **your** statement and you must make the effort to ensure that it includes suitable material and is written clearly. Please be aware that plagiarism of any form is strictly forbidden and will result in you being withdrawn from the UCAS process. UCAS uses very sophisticated software to detect this.

- A general guide to structuring your personal statement is:
 - **Paragraph 1:** A brief outline of why you are applying for this course. Do not mention specific universities – the same application goes to each institution.
 - **Paragraph 2:** Talk about your A Levels. The focus needs to be on the skills that you have gained – for example, how History has taught you to weigh up competing evidence or Physics has taught you the importance of accuracy or developed your mathematical ability. The skills need to be linked to and relevant for your university course.
 - **Paragraph 3:** Relevant work experience/reading/viewing. Again, talk about the skills you have gained or what you have learned – these need to be relevant to your university course. This is where you really show that you have gone beyond A Level in your enthusiasm for the subject for which you are applying.
 - **Paragraph 4:** Talk about any positions of responsibility you have held at school and the skills you have gained.
 - **Paragraph 5:** Your wider interests, hobbies etc.
 - **Paragraph 6:** Concluding paragraph – briefly summarise why you are right for this course, what you hope to gain from studying it at degree level and (perhaps) what you hope to do post-degree.
- The above is a **guide** – paragraph 3 for example may turn out to be several paragraphs.
- Avoid statements that admissions tutors already know - for example, telling them what their subject involves!

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- Most of your personal statement should be geared towards the course for which you are applying – sections on wider interests etc. should be brief. In the case of Oxbridge applications and Medicine and Veterinary Science, they should be **very** brief!

When your Application and Personal Statement have been completed satisfactorily, your tutor will then write your reference. Finally you will need to make the required payment (£26.50 in 2022) - this is added to your school fees and so you won't need to enter credit/debit card details.

References

References are a private document between the School and UCAS, although you **will** be given sight of it by the Head of Sixth Form before your application is submitted so that you have the chance to correct any factual inaccuracies. However, references will not be sent home under any circumstances. In order to write a full and positive reference, tutors will have gathered information from your subject teachers and any other staff who have worked with you in any capacity. They will comment on your academic ability, strengths and weaknesses, attitude, enthusiasm, ability to work independently, organisation and punctuality - to name but a few. Rest assured that we **always** write as positive a reference as possible, but you should be aware that we also have to be honest. Universities must be able to trust our comments and rely on the integrity of the School.

After your application has been sent

Admissions Tutors are tasked with sorting through all the applications and making decisions about whether to reject or accept and, if the latter, what grades to ask for.

You can check the progress of your application - you will receive an individual Personal ID, which will give you access to your application in UCAS Track. Further information on this on-line system will be given to you at a later date.

How do they decide if they want you? They look at your GCSE grades (the number of A/A* grades is significant), choice of A Level subjects, the predictions of your A Level grades, your personal statement and our reference. Academic potential, study habits, handling of responsibility, contribution to the School and wider communities, other relevant courses and suitable experience for your chosen subject are all important criteria by which you will be judged.

Invisibility of Choices

Individual institutions only receive the details of the course or courses that an applicant has applied for at their university or college. If the applicant has made more than one choice of course to the same university then the institution will have access to a list of all the choices for that institution.

Having looked at all these aspects and weighed strengths and weaknesses, the final decision is made. If you are rejected, that is the end of the story for that particular application. You will not necessarily be given the reason for the rejection and there is no 'appeal'. Hopefully, you will be

made an offer. Most courses have a 'standard' offer – the grades, which most students are asked to get. For example, this might be: ABB. This is called a **conditional offer**, in that your place on the course is conditional on obtaining those grades. Furthermore, you may be required to obtain a high grade in a particular subject - e.g. if you are applying to study French and the standard offer is ABB, you may be asked to attain the A grade in French at A level.

Less often, the offer may be in terms of the total number of points to be gained in your three A level subjects e.g. 112 points. This has the advantage of being more flexible and can it can be an advantage to have this style of offer if your ability in different subjects is not evenly balanced.

UCAS Points

A* 56
A 48
B 40
C 32
D 24
E 16

Points are also available from the Extended Project Qualification and certain other qualifications – speak to the Head of Sixth Form or your tutor for more information. The majority of offers, however, will be grade rather than points based.

Admissions Tests

Some universities and some courses will require you to take an admissions test, either before or after you submit your application. Some (non-exhaustive) examples:

- Oxbridge - check the information for your individual course on the Oxford/Cambridge website. Most courses will require you either to sit a test before interview or on the day of the interview itself. In light of Covid, a small number of subjects waived these tests over the last two years, but it is likely they will be reintroduced for 2023 entry.
- Medicine – there are two main entry tests for Medicine: the BMAT and the UCAT. The BMAT is required by Oxford/ Cambridge, Brighton & Sussex Medical School, Imperial, UCL, Lancaster and Leeds; the others require you to take the UCAT. In the case of UCAT, you must register and enter for the test yourself; in the case of the BMAT, the school must make your entry. Some students opt to take both the BMAT and UCAT to broaden the range of institutions to which they can apply.
- Law – some universities require you to take the LNAT, which tests your aptitude for Law. Currently 9 universities ask directly for you to take the LNAT – but this changes, so please check websites of individual universities.

After you have received all of your offers / rejections

Eventually, you will have heard from all of your chosen universities. There is no way of knowing how soon this will be. Some universities will let you know their decision almost immediately after receiving your form, others wait until the last minute. The fact that you have not heard from one of your choices is not necessarily a bad sign, as they are perfectly entitled to wait until their deadline in April. Offers are published on the UCAS website before they are sent to you so check regularly to track the progress of your application. By April, however, you will know where you stand and now *you*, rather than the universities, have to make an important decision. What are your options?

For each of the offers you have been made, you have three choices:

1. **Reject it.**
2. **Accept it as your 'firm' or first choice.**
3. **Accept it as your 'insurance' or second choice.**

You can therefore 'keep' ***up to two*** of your courses at this stage. Your 'firm' acceptance will be the course you hope to study most of all. Your 'insurance' acceptance will usually be a course which has lower grade requirements (in case you do not manage to get the grades for your first choice), but is still one where you would be happy to study. Careful consideration of your final two choices is very important and should not be made without prior consultation with your tutor and/or Head of Sixth Form.

Deadline dates for you to make your final choices are in June in most circumstances, but information will be sent to you by UCAS.

There are some very important things to remember at this stage:

- once you have rejected a course, you can't 'get it back' at a later date if you change your mind.
- if you get the required grades for your firmly accepted offer, you are committed to it; you have, in fact, entered into a contract with that university.
- if you fail to get the grades for your first choice, but succeed in getting the grades for your insurance choice, you are committed to your second choice course.

It is therefore essential that you take time to consider your options and make the best decision for you.

Other points to remember are:

- You can reject ***all*** of your courses, even if they have made you offers, if you decide that you are not happy with any of them or have simply reconsidered your career path. You can then apply again next year or look for a course through UCAS Extra and/or Clearing.

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- You can keep just **one** course, if there really is not a second course that appeals to you. You must **never** accept a course, either as a 'firm' or 'insurance' one, if you do not want to study it.

Unconditional Offers

In recent years, more students have begun receiving 'unconditional' offers – guaranteeing you a place no matter how you perform in your A Levels. These are often contingent upon making the offer your firm choice – in other words, guaranteeing to the university that you will go there.

Unconditional offers can provide a morale boost and be very tempting - and there is no doubt that they are right for some people. But think carefully before leaping on the offer:

- Why is the university doing this? What's in it for them? The answer is that they can plan more effectively because they have a more accurate idea of who will be arriving that September. It makes financial sense to them.
- Is this actually where you want to go? If not and you accept the offer because it 'takes the pressure off' your A Levels, will you be happy?
- Be honest – will you lose academic motivation? A Levels do matter and you want to ensure you get the best possible grades.

Some universities have begun to apply further pressure to get students to take unconditional offers – guaranteeing first choice of accommodation if students accept quickly or, in one recent example, sending out Valentine's Cards. Don't allow yourself to be pressured – take your time, ask for advice and make a considered judgement about whether this is right for you.

UCAS Extra

UCAS Extra enables applicants, who have used **all** their choices and find themselves without offers or those who have declined any offers received, to select an additional choice through UCAS. This will mean that applicants who are non-committed at an early stage in the cycle do not have to wait until Clearing to continue to seek a place. The Extra procedure operates from towards the end of February to the beginning of July. Institutions that have vacancies will list these on the UCAS website. Applicants, who are eligible, will be automatically sent an 'Extra Passport' (rather like Clearing). Applicants can then contact institutions **one at a time**, who may consider them.

Student Finance

Obviously going to university represents a significant financial investment in your future. The vast majority of students will require to take out loans through Student Finance England to cover tuition fees. Most will also take out loans to cover maintenance.

Information on this aspect of university life will be explained in detail at the UCAS Information Evening in September and the Head of Sixth Form will alert students when the on-line application

system opens, usually in March/April of the Upper Sixth year. It is advised to apply before the end of May in order to guarantee funding is in place by the start of the first term. More information can be found at: <https://studentfinance.campaign.gov.uk/>

Accommodation

Most commonly, first year students will stay in university halls of residence. Universities will send information about accommodation along with any offer that they make you – generally, the earlier that accommodation is applied for, the better the chance of getting what you want.

There are alternatives to university accommodation, including private rental, and individual advice will be available for students who need it.

Interviews and Open Days

Between applying in September/October and making your decision in March/April, you will certainly have been invited to go for interviews and/or Open Days by your chosen universities. Some universities will use interviews as part of their selection process, but most do not – all Oxbridge applicants and those applying for medical degrees will need to be prepared for the interview process. You may also be invited to attend an Open Day at which your Department will show you round and answer questions as well as giving you time to look at the campus as a whole.

Interview Practice

We offer practice interviews to all our students who have been invited to interview by their universities with the Headmaster, Head of Sixth Form and/or related professionals in order to ensure success. In recent years we have partnered with another local school to offer interview practice. Students are also given advice and guidance on interview etiquette and, where possible, common questions found in interviews related to their subject.

Open Days, however, are really more to do with having a good look at the place and making sure that you feel comfortable with the department, university and general environment. Initial visits can be made during Lower Sixth and in the summer holiday prior to Upper Sixth. **Many universities now have Open Days on Saturdays and students should, wherever possible, arrange to visit universities at this time.**

This initial 'reconnaissance' should enable you to narrow down your choices into three categories: ones you like very much, ones you think are OK and ones at which you would not want to study. Your choices on your UCAS Form will naturally come from the first two categories.

Be aware that universities are trying to 'sell' themselves to you - they are chasing the most desirable students as much as you are chasing after their places. It is important to be a little critical about what you see and to make sure that you ask questions about anything which is not made clear or is worrying you. Do not forget, though, that you can always contact them afterwards if you need more information.

Post-Offer Open Days

Students who have received offers to study at certain universities may be invited to a Post-Offer Open Day. This gives students a greater insight into what it is like to study at the institution as well as meet undergraduates, staff and academics.

Results Day

Universities will have received your results before they are released to you and, in most cases, will already have made a decision about whether to accept you by the time you get to see your grades. **Students** can access the status of their university offers on line through UCAS on the morning of Results' Day.

Scenarios:

- If you have met the grades for your first or firm choice then you are automatically accepted and there is no need to do anything except celebrate and wait for them to contact you.
- If your first choice university does not accept you, but you have met the grades for your second or insurance offer, then you are automatically accepted by your second choice university. Again, it is the 'celebrate.....' scenario.
- If you have also missed the grades for your insurance university, you should phone them and see if they will still accept you. Again, we find that this can happen but they do not have to take you if their course is full.
- If you have met the grades for either your firm or insurance offers but no longer wish to go to either of them, then you must withdraw from the system for this year. You cannot opt to go through Clearing or try to find another course which you now feel would suit you better. You can try asking the university to release you from your commitment, but try to avoid this situation.
- If you have missed the grades for your chosen course, you may find that one of your universities will offer you a place on a slightly different, less popular course. Think carefully before accepting. It is tempting to take the offer because it saves going through Clearing, but if it is not really a course that you would otherwise have considered, you are less likely to be happy studying it.
- If you find that you have not been accepted by either of your chosen universities, you have several options. The first of these is to go into '**Clearing**'. This is the system run by UCAS to match unplaced students with spare places on courses. You will automatically be sent a form by UCAS, who will know that you have not met your required grades. However, it is important that you do not waste time waiting for this to arrive. Get on the phone immediately in school to university departments who have courses that you would like and try to persuade them that you are exactly the student they need. The important thing is not to panic or despair but to act promptly and decisively. There are many course vacancies to choose from, particularly if you have decent grades. You may have to compromise a little, either on location or course, but you would have to be very fussy indeed not to find something acceptable.
- **Spaces are published on both the UCAS and university websites.**

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- If you do not want to go through Clearing, perhaps because you would prefer to try again next year, then you can withdraw from the UCAS system altogether for that year. You can then make a fresh application for the following year – we are more than happy to continue to offer guidance, even if you have left the School. You will, in any case, need us for your reference.

Remember:

- You **must** be around when results come out. **DO NOT** arrange your holiday for the second half of August.
- This is **your** life that is at stake. **DO NOT** leave it to parents to sort out courses, accommodation etc.
- **YOU ARE NOT ON YOUR OWN.** Staff from the School will be on hand when you come in to collect your results to give advice and help. You will be able to use our telephones and computers to contact universities and look at course vacancies etc and then, if necessary, we can discuss the options open to you.
- It is **ESSENTIAL** to act quickly, particularly if you are applying through Clearing.
- **EVERYONE**, therefore, should have a contingency plan in case results are a disappointment. Plan **beforehand** which universities and/or courses you would be prepared to consider as alternatives and look these up online.

Taking a Gap Year

Taking a Gap Year can be viewed favourably by universities, so long as you do something worthwhile with the time. This means choosing activities or jobs which will broaden your mind and experiences, enable you to show initiative and enterprise and enhance your attitude to study when you eventually arrive in Higher Education. Some or all of the 'year out' is usually spent abroad, staying long enough in a country to become immersed in the society and culture and working and/or volunteering. Although it is now widely acceptable, all students considering taking a Gap Year should always check with the relevant department of their chosen institution(s) that it will not jeopardise their chances of a place the following year.

Parents often fear that their son or daughter will lose interest in study and will come back from a trip abroad with no motivation left for Higher Education. Experience suggests that usually the reverse happens: students return as adults, more mature and with renewed enthusiasm for studying their subject. They often have a much clearer idea of their aims.

It is not, however, an easy option. Visas and work permits are not always easy to obtain and accumulating enough money before you set out can be a challenge. The usual way to go about it is to find a temporary job between July and December, saving hard during this time. You then have about six months to travel and enjoy the freedom of planning your own itinerary.

An alternative is to take a year out with one of the recognised agencies which arrange a variety of jobs abroad, usually in developing countries. They charge a fee or require you to fund-raise quite a large amount. The advantage of travelling with such organisations is that they are experienced and have back-up already in place in the countries covered.

Whatever you choose, you will, again, need to research your plans carefully and well in advance if you are to make good use of this time.

DO NOT LEAVE IT TO THE LAST MINUTE.

Consult

- Tutors
- Head of Sixth Form/ Senior Teacher (Enrichment)
- Organisations' Websites
- Past Gap Year students
- Inspiring Futures helpline and website www.inspiringfutures.org.uk

How will this affect your UCAS application?

You have two options:

1. Apply now for 'deferred entry', explaining in your personal statement what you will be doing in your gap year.
2. Apply next academic year – the school will still support you with your application.

Conclusion

The transition from school to university does require considerable effort and input on your part. This commitment is not just confined to the study necessary to obtain excellent A Level grades, but also involves the thorough research and preparation needed if you are to make a successful application to the university which best meets your interests and career aims. You should be reassured, however, by the fact that the vast majority of our students secure a place at their first choice university and go on to positively enjoy their time in Higher Education. The message is clear: some perseverance and hard work for a relatively short time now will pay off later.

This booklet, whilst a summary of the essential points, has we hope shown you how to go about finding out more information. Members of staff are always willing to help you and to answer questions. Ask us if you are unsure or worried - the rest is up to you!

Key Dates for UCAS applications ~ 2023 entry

UCAS Exhibition, Birmingham
21 June 2022

UCAT registration (for Medicine) opens **24 May 2022**; tests can be booked from **20 June 2022**. All UCAT tests must be taken between **11 July and 29 September 2022**. **Entries for the BMAT** will be taken by the school from **1st September 2022**.

UCAS Apply

UCAS Undergraduate Apply opens for applicants to register and start their applications from **17 May 2022** – initial registration will take place in school during Enrichment.

Personal Statement writing workshops

Enrichment – in second half of Summer Term

UCAS Information Evening for parents September 2022, date tbc

Applications for Oxbridge, Dentistry, Medicine and Veterinary Science
15 October 2022

Applications for all other courses/institutions
15 January, 2023

Higher Education Glossary

BMAT	Bio-Medical Admissions Test – for some medicine degrees at Bristol, Cambridge, Oxford, Royal Veterinary College, University College, Imperial College, Manchester. See BMAT website for further details including registration process
CUKAS	Conservatoires UK Admission Service – for music courses at Birmingham Conservatoire, Leeds College of Music, Royal College of Music, Royal Northern College of Music, Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, Trinity College of Music
Conditional Offer	An offer which depends on getting certain grades
Decline	You receive an offer but decide to reject it
Defer	Apply this year, but not start the course until a year later. If you would like to do this, make sure that the university accepts deferred entry for your course and remember to indicate Deferred in Section 3 of your application
Degree	A three or four year programme of HE study <ul style="list-style-type: none">• BA – Bachelor of Arts• Bed – Bachelor of Education• BEng – Bachelor of Engineering• BMus – Bachelor of Music• BSc – Bachelor of Science• BVSc – Bachelor of Veterinary Science• FA or FSc – Foundation Degree – vocational degree. Can lead on to a full degree• LLB – Bachelor of Law• MBChB – Bachelor of Medicine• Combined degree – made up of modules of different subjects• Joint degree – two subjects studied equally• Single degree – focus on one major subject• Sandwich course – periods of study at university are alternated with periods of study in industry• Sandwich courses usually last for 4 years
Firm Acceptance	Your first choice of course (see Insurance)
Foundation Degree	Before your first year if you don't have the right qualifications e.g. for Art, Engineering, Medicine degree

Jargon	What it means
LNAT	National test for Law – needed for entry to some law degrees
UCAS	Universities and College Admission Service
UCAS Track	Online system for tracking progress of your application
UCAS Apply	The UCAS online application system
UCAT	UK Clinical Aptitude Test – used in the selection process by a consortium of UK medical and Dental Schools.
Art Courses	Some Art and Design courses will use an application deadline that may be outside of UCAS. The application deadline will be clearly shown on course search at www.ucas.com . Course search will also allow students access to course entry profiles, which will specify whether a portfolio, interview or other evidence may be required as part of the selection and admission process. Applicants view their invitation to attend an interview or audition, submit a portfolio etc using Track
UCAS Extra	If you have used all of your five choices and you find yourself without any offers, for whatever reason, you can use Extra – it will allow you to select another choice without having to wait until clearing
Unconditional Offer	An offer which is not dependent on the grades you receive at A Level.
Clearing	Opens on A Level results day and helps to place students who have not got the right grade or who have applied late on courses where there are still places

Your own notes/information