

BHASVIC

**A PARENTS' & CARERS'
GUIDE TO HIGHER EDUCATION**

March 2017

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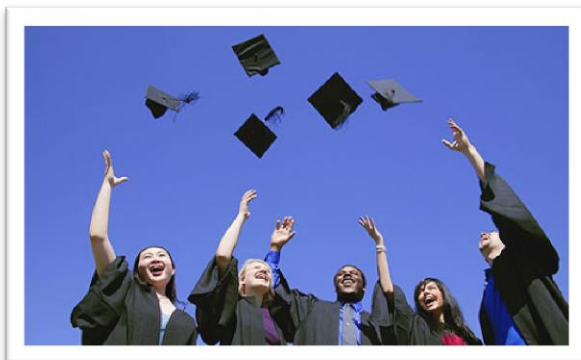
Introduction to Higher Education

It may seem as though your son or daughter has only just got here, but it is important for them to start thinking now about what they will do when they leave.

The main options open to students are:

- To carry on in full time education, either at a University for a degree or a Further Education College (e.g. Art Foundation)
- To study a part time course, e.g. with the Open University or take a Distance Learning Course
- To take up employment (with or without) training
- To take time out from formal learning

Students planning to take a degree course in Art and Design normally follow a one year Art Foundation course or Diploma course at a further education college and apply to university during that year.



A significant number of our students progress directly to employment with A Level / BTEC qualifications and the College provides advice and support on the range of opportunities that are available to those considering this route.

However, the majority of our students go on to study at Higher Education level. This guide has been produced to support that application process.

Before even considering applying to university, it is worthwhile getting your son or daughter to think about the following questions:

- Why do I want to go to university?
- What do I want to study?
- Why this subject and not others?
- Where do I want to live?
- What are the financial commitments?
- Will it be worth it?

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<https://www.bhasvic.ac.uk/parents-and-carers/university-applications/>

Contact us for help

Please do email us with any BHASVIC specific or general questions regarding Higher Education.

We have a dedicated email address for questions, although please be aware every higher education institution is different, with requirements, and we often can't give specific advice on institutions and courses.

<mailto:HE@bhasvic.ac.uk>

We will aim to reply in term time as soon as possible and emails are monitored most holiday times, although there may be a short delay.



BHASVIC Headline figures

- Total BHASVIC University applicant figures for 2015 have increased substantially from 647 in 2014, to 893 in 2015, of which 170 are ex-students. This year for Sept 2017 entry we expect over 1000 applications.
- 87% of BHASVIC students applying to University were successfully placed on a university course, compared with a national figure of 74%.
- 96.6% of our applicants receive offers compared to 87% nationally
- 77% of BHASVIC students accepted their firm choice compared to 68% nationally, suggesting that most students achieved the grades required to accept their first university choice.
- 45% of BHASVIC students accepted a place at a higher tariff university (including Oxbridge / Russell Group universities) - substantially higher than the national average of 20%.
- The most popular subject area for acceptances last year was History with 53 acceptances. Our second most popular is Psychology (45) and Maths (33).
- Of note is a substantial increase in acceptances into medicine: Pre-clinical medicine (17) and Anatomy, Physiology and Pathology (12).
- The most popular HE provider with BHASVIC students is University of Sussex (61 – more than double last year's 30), followed by Bristol (40) and Manchester (37).
- Our destination data shows that our students from local state schools match our students from the Independent sector.
- The percentage of BHASVIC students achieving a first class degree in all HE institutions is, on average over the last three years, more than 6% above average of all other sectors.

Changes in Higher Education

These are volatile times for Higher Education and there is a lot of media coverage about potential changes.

As a College we keep a close eye on these possible changes and take care to think about the effects they might have on our students.

It would be a long, tedious and highly technical discussion to give you all the information about changes that may (or may not) occur but we will be touching on the following key changes which are already in place and will affect your young person:

- The increase in tuition fees to a maximum of £9250
- The 'Widening Participation' agenda and what this really means.
- Universities, student numbers and the effects on required grades.
- Student number caps and the ABB+ student

And generally we can summarise into two broad points;

1. To get maximum benefit from Higher Education, students have **to start researching choices early**, make use of all the sources of help available and take responsibility for making a decision about their future
2. Interested, supportive and objective parents are invaluable when it comes to helping their son/daughter to choose between the bewildering range of courses and options on offer; a choice which can often leave students suffering from 'paralysis of analysis', unable to make a decision.



University Entry Requirements

Universities usually have a general admissions policy about the average standard they expect their undergraduates to have achieved on entry, but also have subject specific entry requirements and grade requirements.

Subject specific entry requirements

Different subjects will have their own specific entry requirements which will vary from university to university. Information about entry requirements is available in individual university prospectus or on-line.

What are the entry requirements?

In general, the **minimum** entry requirements are:

For Degree Courses

5 subjects passed at GCSE Grade A* – C and 2 subjects at A-level

Or

An Advanced Diploma

Or

A BTEC National Certificate (12 units)

For Higher National Diploma/Foundation Degree

5 subjects at GCSE Grade A* – C and 2 subjects studied at A-level standard with at least one A-level pass

Or

An Advanced Diploma

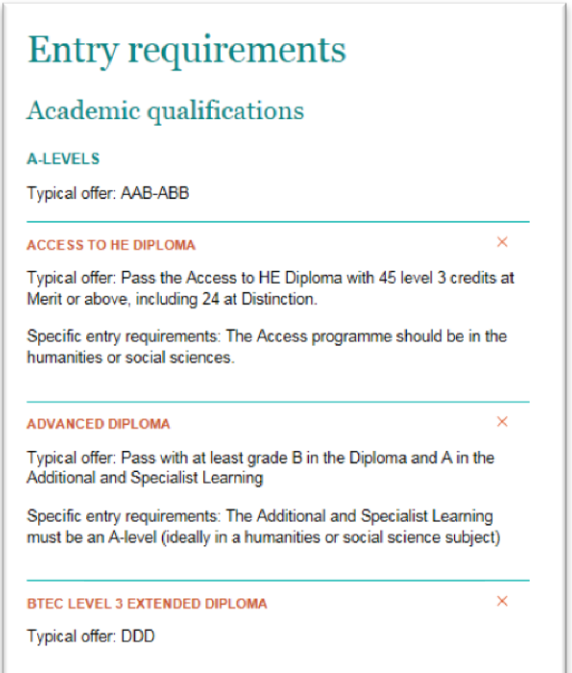
Or

A BTEC National Certificate (12 units)

These are the **minimum entry requirements to Higher Education** and do not necessarily guarantee entry to the course of choice. Individual institutions and indeed, individual departments within those institutions will often set specific subject and grade requirements and/or require further evidence of ability and commitment.

Many university departments set tests for students thinking of applying for their courses. These include a BMAT or UKCAT for students applying to study medicine, and an LNAT for students applying to study law.

Entry requirements are clearly advertised on university course information webpages.



The screenshot shows a webpage titled 'Entry requirements' with a sub-section 'Academic qualifications'. It lists three qualification types: A-LEVELS, ACCESS TO HE DIPLOMA, and ADVANCED DIPLOMA, each with a typical offer and specific entry requirements. A fourth option, BTEC LEVEL 3 EXTENDED DIPLOMA, is partially visible at the bottom.

Qualification	Typical offer	Specific entry requirements
A-LEVELS	AAB-ABB	
ACCESS TO HE DIPLOMA	Pass the Access to HE Diploma with 45 level 3 credits at Merit or above, including 24 at Distinction.	The Access programme should be in the humanities or social sciences.
ADVANCED DIPLOMA	Pass with at least grade B in the Diploma and A in the Additional and Specialist Learning	The Additional and Specialist Learning must be an A-level (ideally in a humanities or social science subject)
BTEC LEVEL 3 EXTENDED DIPLOMA	DDD	

2. UCAS (University Central Admissions Service) Tariff

Universities might ask an applicant to achieve a certain number of points rather than specific grades. The point tariff is listed below:

A level UCAS Tariffs

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

AS levels (40% A level)	
A	20
B	16
C	12
D	10
E	6

Extended Project	
A*	28
A	24
B	20
C	16
D	12
E	8

BTEC UCAS Tariffs

BTEC Certificate	
D*	28
D	24
M	16
P	8

BTEC Subsidiary Diploma	
D*	56
D	48
M	32
P	16

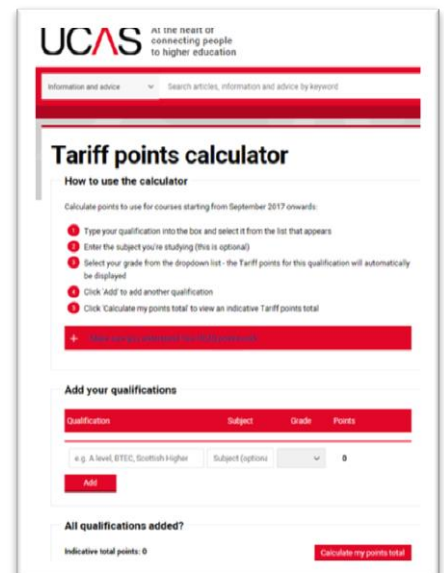
BTEC Diploma	
D*D*	112
D*D	104
DD	96
DM	80
MM	64
MP	48
PP	32

BTEC Extended Diploma	
D*D*D*	168
D*D*D	160
D*DD	152
DDD	144
DDM	128
DMM	112
MMM	96
MMP	80
MPP	64
PPP	48

3. UCAS Tariff Calculator

There are several UCAS points calculators online.

For example <https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/entry-requirements/tariff/calculator>



Subject Areas and Sector Information

1. BHASVIC most popular subject destinations

The largest numbers of students from BHASVIC applied, and were accepted for, the following subjects last year.

1. History by Period
2. Psychology
3. Mathematics
4. English studies
5. Law by Area
6. Combs of 3 subjects, or other general courses
7. Politics
8. Economics
9. Sport and Exercise Science
10. Pre-clinical Medicine
11. Computer Science
12. Media studies
13. Chemistry
14. Combs of languages with arts/humanities
15. Anatomy, Physiology and Pathology



(Source: UCAS)

2. The UK's top 10 growth industries:

1. Rental and leasing activities
2. Other professional, scientific and technical activities
3. Activities of head offices; management consultancy activities
4. Architectural and engineering activities; technical testing and analysis
5. Office administrative, office support and other business support activities
6. Publishing activities
7. Manufacture of computer, electronic and optical products
8. Computer programming, consultancy and related activities
9. Manufacture of beverages
10. Scientific research and development

(Source: <https://www.enterprisenation.com/blog/posts/britain-s-hottest-business-sectors-revealed>)

As well as high growth industries, the report also identified the sectors most at risk.

The entertainment industry, including video, sound recording and music production, tops the list, impacted by increased competition from competing US brands.

- For information about the **graduate job market** including salaries <https://www.prospects.ac.uk>

What makes a good University?

Knowing where a university and/or course stands in the pecking order of Higher Education is regarded as a vital piece of information for any prospective student and their parents. Employers discriminate between institutions and between classes of degree; the existence of many diverse institutions and an ever-growing pool of graduates makes a pecking order inevitable.

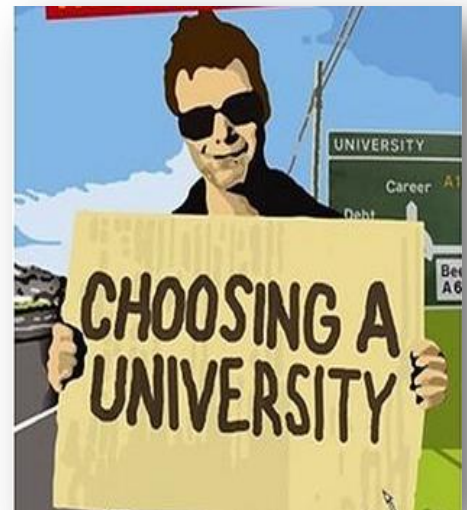
However the whole Higher Education system has changed dramatically over the past few years; it can be both misleading and dangerous to rely on other people's opinions and experiences (which may be at best subjective and at worst out dated and inaccurate) or on the array of League Tables, unless you really understand the criteria on which these are based.

Your main guideline must be what is right and relevant for your son/daughter; the 'best' course is the one that allows them to develop to their maximum potential.

So whilst you might use university rankings as a starting point, view them in context, not in isolation. They are only one of the information sources available and an excellent ranking for research may not equate to a stimulating and exciting undergraduate course.

1. Some points to bear in mind

1. Do not assume that the content of courses across Higher Education Institutions is the same; courses with the same title can vary enormously, reflecting the approach of the university and/or the interests of the department
2. Some universities will concentrate on developing a reputation in particular subjects; others spread their resources more widely. It is important to look at the particular departments and subject areas within the institution and not just at the reputation of the university as a whole – the most modest institution may have a centre of excellence and the famous universities may have some mediocre departments.
3. Do not assume that high entry grade requirements indicate excellence; they usually reflect the competitiveness of the courses which can be a comment on the popularity of the location of an institution. However, remember that courses with high entry requirements (for whatever reason) get filled by "high calibre" students which, in turn, may indicate a more challenging learning experience.
4. Do look at the range of courses on offer in a department. For instance if a language department in a university only offers French, it is unlikely to be as well-resourced as a university offering a wide range of languages.



University Prospectuses: These are the main way to obtain information about specific courses. Each university produces its own prospectus. Students must read the prospectus carefully. They are available for reference in the Student Services Centre. They are also available on the Internet on each university's website.

- **University Prospectus Finder** Order your **10** free copies sent to your home address.
<http://www.prospectusfinder.co.uk>
- **Which University** very helpful information including ideas for questions on open days
<http://university.which.co.uk/>
- **Other useful websites**
- www.thestudentroom.co.uk/wiki/Choosing_a_University
- <http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/>
- www.guardian.co.uk/education/universityguide

2. Open Days

Open Days: If students have not already visited universities of interest, they could attend an open day. Information on when these take place is available in prospectuses, on the website or by phoning universities. Details of all Open Days are available in the Student Services Centre.

We highly recommend that students visit universities before they decide to Apply. It is the most effective way of seeing whether a university is right for them.



Students are authorised for any open day absences – they just need to bring confirmation of their visit to reception.

They are generally organised between May-Oct.

We would recommend taking a pen and paper with a list of questions to ask. Also remember to take photos on your mobile for review later. Really useful questions to ask can be found here
<http://university.which.co.uk/advice/open-days>

- Find out about taster days and summer schools <http://www.unitasterdays.com/>
- To find out more about **University Open Days** visit [opendays.com](http://www.opendays.com/) <http://www.opendays.com/>

2. Most popular University destinations for BHASVIC students last year

In order our most popular destinations for our students are:

University of Sussex , University of Bristol, The University of Manchester, University of Brighton, University of Sheffield, University of Southampton, University of the West of England, Bristol (UWE) , University of Cambridge, University of Exeter, University of Portsmouth, University of East Anglia (UEA), University of Kent, University of Bath, University of Leeds, Bournemouth University.

How to choose the right Course

This is crucial for any student, not only because they will be spending three or four years of their life studying the subject, but also because the financial commitment is high.

It is therefore really important for students to do research into the appropriate course. The starting point is to identify courses that they will find interesting, and the following resources are very useful:-

- **UCAS (Universities Central Admissions System) Website:** This contains lists of degree courses within the UCAS system. It can search for subjects, types of courses (e.g. degree or HND), and locations in the UK. The address of the website is www.ucas.com and is available to all students on computers in the Library, computer rooms and the Student Services Centre. The website can be accessed from home
- **College Intranet (Virtual Learning Environment/VLE):** This site provides up to date information on Higher Education applications and links to other sites. Available in and outside the College

Having identified potential courses, it is essential that students research the course thoroughly. What A-level grades are needed to be considered for the course? Are certain A levels required to do the degree course? Does the course involve work placements or a year abroad?

Students need to take advantage of the following if they want to be well informed about their course:

- **Degree Course Offers**, written by Brian Heap, gives a comprehensive guide on entry to UK universities and colleges. It is available in the Student Services Centre and is exceptionally helpful. Students are also able to access this online- Student Services have the relevant log in details for this.
- **League Tables** are available online from a number of sources but do need careful use.

If students are still confused, they can get further advice and help from their tutor, teachers or by going to the Student Services Centre.

Unistats is a very good source of information and also useful for comparing courses.

<http://www.unistats.co.uk/>

The screenshot shows the Unistats website interface. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for Home, Your Unistats, Subjects, Universities & colleges, Course Assistant, and About Unistats. Below the navigation is a search bar with a 'Search' button and a 'More search options' link. The main heading reads 'The official website for comparing UK higher education course data'. Below this, there is a brief description of the site's purpose. The main content area is divided into two columns: 'Course assistant' with icons for Subject, Qualification, Study mode, Location, and Characteristics; and 'Universities & colleges' with an A-Z grid. A sidebar on the right contains a video guide, tweets, and a download link for resources for teachers and advisers.

1. Summary of Course considerations

- What grades do you need?
- Assessment/exams/coursework
- lecture time/independent study
- Professional qualifications?
- Gender split/mature students?
- Combination of courses?
- Combination of subjects?
- Work experience needed?
- Work placements offered?
- Study abroad?
- Interview or portfolio needed?
- Accept resits?
- Grades or tariffs?
- Foundation year available?
- How many students receive offers?
- What kind of graduate destinations are there?
- Tuition fees?



Completing UCAS Apply online 	UCAS Timeline Sept 2017 entry 	Is Uni for Me? 	Using Unifrog
Online Resources to help you 	Uni Open Day Info 	UCAS Tariff Sept 2017 entry 	UCAS Tracking
UCAS Clearing & Adjustment 	Writing your Personal Statement 	Art , Foundation, Music 	Student Finance
Uni Accomodation 	Study in Scotland 	Dutch Universities 2016 	Widening Participation
Useful VLE links 	Predicted Grades 	University Resources 	Progression day 2016

Please encourage your young person to access the college intranet (VLE).

The University page has plenty of information and links.

How BHASVIC helps students – Our UCAS year 2017/18

The following calendar gives you some idea of how students are helped at BHASVIC in deciding whether or not to apply for higher education and if they do decide to apply, how to select their university and relevant course. Students are also given help in the application process.

A1 Year (Spring 2017)

- Is HE for me? - Tutor sessions considering pathways – higher education, apprenticeships
- A1-A2 Transfer - Students make their second year course choices
- Higher Education/Specialist evenings for parents/carers – parents evenings
- Careers staff available – students encouraged to book appointments with our careers staff

How parents/carers can support: HE evening for parents/carers, talk to students about their BHASVIC course choices, future plans.

A1 Year (Summer 2017)

1. Research skills – 4/5 Tutor sessions dedicated to considering university choices
2. Open days – Students begin to attend open days at universities they may be interested in
3. Careers Enrichment Day – Students must attend careers sessions of their choice
4. Careers staff available – students encouraged to book appointments with our careers staff
5. Personal Statements – Students introduced to personal statements – an important aspect of their applications
6. Help me write your reference – Students give info to tutors to help them write references
7. Subject references – drafts are completed, prior to September final updates. Subject references sent home to parents / carers at the end of term
8. Tutor references – drafts are completed, prior to September final updates.

How parents/carers can support: Support students in researching options. Support and encourage students to attend university open days. Discuss choices and encourage matching preferred choices with realistic predicted grades. Home will receive subject references.

Open Days: There is a lot of useful info online. Students will be spending a lot of time and money at University and we strongly suggest visiting universities to check they are right for them. Prime times are June/July and September/October. Students need to plan and book online in advance. We will authorise absences on receipt of evidence (emails) to reception.

Open Days: <http://www.opendays.com/>

UCAS Open Days search tool: <https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/events-and-open-days>

Get the best out of Open days: <http://university.which.co.uk/advice/open-days/how-to-get-the-most-out-of-university-open-days>

A2 Year (Autumn 2018)

- College Internal Deadline for Oxbridge / Medics 15th September 2017
- College Internal Deadline for all guaranteed UCAS applications Friday 24th November 2017
- Personal Statements – focus in tutorial on writing Personal Statements (5/6 sessions) and support given by tutors on draft statements to improve quality
- UCAS Apply Sessions – BHASVIC runs regular sessions (every lunchtime through mid-October to end of November) where Guidance managers will check students' online applications. Students MUST attend a session for their application to progress
- References and Personal Statements reviewed in tutor sessions

How parents/carers can support: Continue to support researching options. Open days will still be available early in the autumn term. Read through personal statements. Encourage to be realistic about choices reflective of predicted grades. Remind students to check their emails.

Ensure deadlines are met: This is crucial. Our internal deadline for applications guaranteed for submission in time for the national UCAS deadline on 15th January is Friday 25th November. We state that it may take up to 10 days to process applications. This is because we process almost 900 applications and many of our general office staff (and university staff) will be term time only so do not work over Christmas. Also if there is an error on a student's form we will need to contact the student to ask them to correct the information. If students do not check their emails regularly this becomes problematic.

Aspirational/Solid/Safe: We encourage students to make a mix of applications. Aspirational choices will be slightly above predicted grades, solid will predict their grades and safe may well be slightly under. This will ensure they are able to make effective Firm and Insurance Offers when universities make offers later on.

Firm/Insurance offers: There is lots of really good information online regarding offers. A good place to start is <http://university.which.co.uk/advice/ucas-application/firm-and-insurance-choice-replying-to-university-offers>

Predicted Grades

For more information regarding our processes on predicting student grades please see policy (Page 19).

A2 Year (Spring 2018)

1. FINAL UCAS Application deadline 15th January 2018 (Internal deadline 25th November 2017)
2. Tutor – University preparation - accommodation / Student Finance / Independent Living
3. FINAL UCAS Application deadline for art / design foundation courses 24th March 2018 (check individual institutions)
4. Offers and replies
5. Student Finance Applications

How parents/carers can support: Remind students to check their emails and UCAS track. Students need to register for student finance around May-time. They will need their NI number. If they delay their finance may be delayed, including their maintenance loans for September.

Student Finance Applications Usually open for registration in Spring. Students must register before the deadline (please check – Usually sometime in May). They will confirm after results day when accepting their offers.

A2 Year (Summer 2018)

1. Deadline for University replies and offers – check UCAS website
2. Clearing and UCAS Extra opens for late applications.
3. Study leave and revision!

How parents/carers can support: Support students with revision. Planning for University – discuss accommodation and finance. Encourage learning skills of Independent Living including budgeting, basic cooking skills etc.

A2 Year (Results day)

- ❑ 16th August 2018 – BHASVIC Helpdesk opens (until end of August)
- ❑ UCAS Adjustment opens
- ❑ UCAS Apply 31st August Offer conditions must be met & Adjustment ends

How parents/carers can support: Support students with acceptances/offers/clearing. Students may contact universities through clearing or adjustment (when grades are better than expected).

General UCAS info for Parents / Carers

There is a huge amount of information online regarding university choices and higher education. This is just a few suggestions of websites to browse. It is worth spending time with your sons/daughters looking together researching the right courses and institutions for them.



Personal Statements

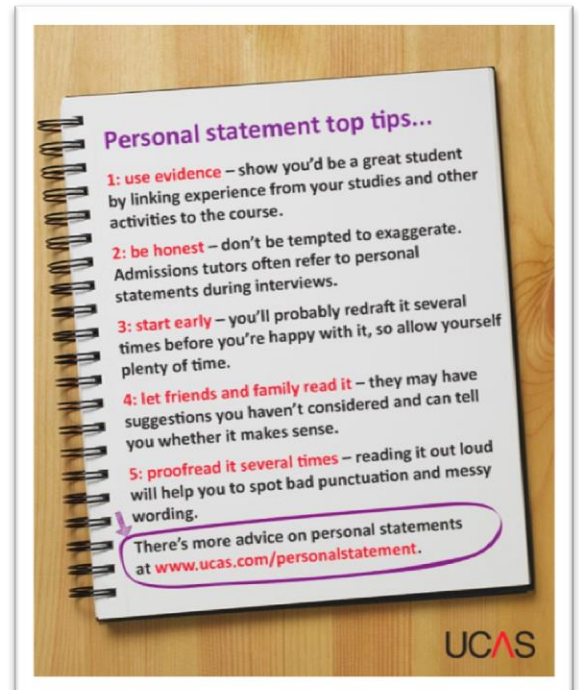
The UCAS personal statement is a crucial part of the university application process. It's also something that you can get involved in by offering encouragement, feedback and a fresh pair of eyes.

The personal statement covers the following main areas:

- Reasons for choosing the degree
- School/college experience
- How A levels contribute to degree choice
- Main areas of interest and abilities gained whilst studying for A level

Relevant work placements especially if thinking of applying for teaching, medicine or law

- Interests and experience outside of College
- Sporting involvements
- Work experience
- If student is taking a gap year, what they intend to do during this year



Specialist tutors are available to help refine the personal statement. However, the main responsibility for this lies with the student. It is important to know that students' personal statements are compared against a library of personal statements to identify students who may have used the internet to buy or copy personal statements. UCAS will inform the university if this is the case.

We spend a large amount of the autumn term supporting students writing their personal statements; help from home would be most welcome.

Getting started

This is often the hardest part, so get it down on paper together any way you can. Try using mind-maps, spider diagrams, bullet point notes, or just scribble things down in a long stream of consciousness, which your young person can edit later.

Encouragement

It's up to your child to get their personal statement written, but some positive encouragement will help them stay motivated.

Proofreading

Help your son or daughter pay attention to the little things that make a big difference. Check for spelling and grammar.

Some useful final checks

- ❑ **Relevance** to the course:
- ❑ **Your child's suitability** to the course should form the backbone of their personal statement, so ensure they've gathered examples from their experience that specifically relate to course criteria
- ❑ **Imagine you're the admissions tutor:** Does it read well and make sense, does your son or daughter's true personality come through – and the ultimate test: would you want this student in your seminar group?
- ❑ **Language and tone:** If your child wouldn't say something in a day-to-day discussion, don't let it slip into their statement.
- ❑ **Encourage** them to steer clear of overblown phrases such as grammar – and avoid txtspk
- ❑ Break up the text and use paragraphs
- ❑ Avoid using 'I' at the start of every sentence.

Make sure they aren't trying to cram in every skill and experience they've built up – remember that less is more.

The little things....

This is one of the most important parts of writing a good personal statement. If your child can reflect critically on their experience, achievements and knowledge, they'll get the attention of admissions tutors.

For example:

- how did they develop the customer care skills that made them employee of the month?
- how has basketball improved their teamwork, leadership or communication skills?
- what is it that they admire about Cervantes' novels or Katherine Dunham's choreography?

With each example they use to demonstrate their experience, apply the 'ABC' test:

- **Action:** explaining what they have done, achieved, read or experienced
- **Benefit:** reflecting on what they have learned or gained from it
- **Course relevance:** why does this make them a good applicant for their chosen course?
-

Policy on Students' Predicted Grades

What are they?

A UCAS Predicted Grade is an honest, professional judgement provided by the College about the most likely final grade the student will achieve in the qualification on completion of the subject. A UCAS Predicted Grade is a grade provided in a student's College reference. These grades are most commonly used for a student's UCAS application, but they can also be used by the College for other student application processes and reference requests. The College takes into account all available and relevant information but the prediction itself is not negotiable.

When and where are UCAS Predicted Grades used?

UCAS Predicted Grades are generated for A2 students in the first two weeks of September by teaching staff. The grades are added to the student reference, drafted in the second half of the summer term in the student's A1 year. The written reference is updated and predicted grade added after the release of A1 grades (for example, official exam results and AS grades, progressions and resit exam results, summative end of year assessments, key formal assessments throughout the year, coursework and mock exam results, etc).

How are predictions made?

A-level predicted grades are generally based on performance at A1 level and/or formal assessments within the subject (coursework, progression exams, etc). These form the basis of accurate and evidential predictions. Predictions for BTECs and other vocational subjects are similarly based on formal assessments of work completed to date, as are predictions for one-year subjects. It is worth remembering universities can see unit grades and Universal Mark Scheme (UMS) scores, so our predictions **have** to be in line with these unless there is a good reason for them not to be. Indeed, the UCAS guidelines for advisors states that:

Over-predicting grades can be counter-productive because many universities and colleges monitor the accuracy of schools' and colleges' predictions.

At the teacher's discretion a UCAS predicted grade can be varied from A1 grades to take account of firm evidence that the student is likely to do better. There is a presumption that predictions will not be lower than A1 assessments and results, and certainly not without consulting the Head of Department and the student's Guidance Manager.

Re-sits: If a student is re-sitting an exam for a subject they should indicate this via their UCAS Application Form. Re-sits alone are not a basis on which a teacher should raise a predicted grade - there should be clear evidence that:

1. The student has considered the content of the unit they sat and are re-sitting and can demonstrate to the teacher that they know and understand where they need to focus and which aspects of the unit they can improve;
2. They have a clear strategy for gaining this improvement and can communicate this to their teacher;
3. The student's learning and maturity has improved through A2 work seen.

If a teacher is changing a grade to one or two grades above an A1 grade, it is essential an explanation provided in the student's reference from that teacher/ subject, otherwise a University is likely to simply interpret this as an over-estimation and this will weaken the status of predicted grades provided by other subjects in the student's reference. Further variation (for example, in the case of exceptional personal circumstances for an individual, unusual outcomes or something which affected a whole class or cohort, etc.) should be overseen by the Head of Department to ensure consistency and fairness.

Queries regarding UCAS Predicted Grades

Students are asked in the first instance to contact their subject teacher to provide advice and guidance with regard to their predicted grades. We would hope that students will understand how the grade has been generated and its relationship to working assessment grades.

Communication to students

Students will be given an introduction to predicted grades and how they are generated in A1 tutorial during the first half of the Spring Term, when they are exploring their progression plans. This comes late enough for A1 students to put the information into context, but early enough so that they can act on it in support of their ambitions. In the A2 year, students will be able to see their predicted grades as part of the UCAS Application process.

Communication to parents/ carers

Parents/ carers are sent a copy of the draft reference at the end of the A1 year; this reference **does not** include UCAS Predicted Grades for subjects.



Finance

Firstly, you don't have to pay your child's tuition fees upfront...

So you can start breathing normally again!

Your child can apply for a tuition fee loan to take care of this. So they can head off to university, without the worry of paying this back until after they've graduated.

Your child's student loan, broken down

There are two types of student loan available: the tuition fee loan we mentioned above, and a maintenance loan. Both must be paid back at a later date.

The maintenance loan is there to help with living costs, such as accommodation, food, travel, going out etc. The amount your child is eligible to borrow in maintenance loans depends on several factors, including where they will be studying and your family's household income.

There is much help and support online regarding student finance.

Your young person will be expected to register in March and complete the application in May of the year they wish to apply. Any later could delay their application.

Useful websites include:

Student Loans Company www.slc.co.uk

UCAS www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/finance-and-support

Student Finance England www.sfenland.slc.co.uk

Student Finance www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance

Money Saving Expert <http://www.moneysavingexpert.com/students/student-loans-tuition-fees-changes>

Check out **scholarships available** <http://www.thescholarshipub.org.uk/>

Accommodation

Information about accommodation should be provided by university institutions.

There is usually information available on their websites and more information given on open days.

Accommodation is often the largest cost associated with attending University and whilst many halls of residence and first year accommodation is of reasonably similar cost care should be taken to assess the cost of private accommodation which is usually accessed in the second and subsequent years of degree study.

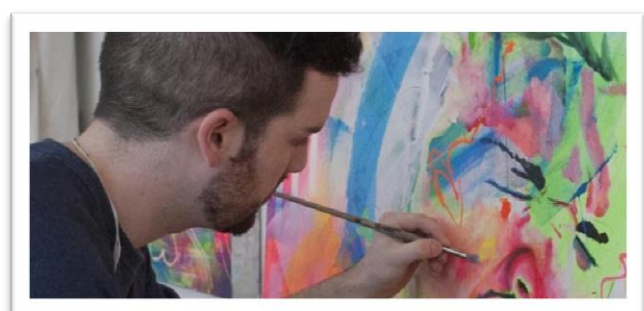


Progression / Oxbridge / Medics / Visual Arts / Conservatoires

We have a dedicated tutorial programme for Work and Apprenticeship routes, Oxbridge and Medics (including dentistry and veterinary science), Visual Arts students applying to Art Foundation courses and will also support applications to Conservatoires.

Please note that if your young person falls into one of these categories they will have been given guidance and support during tutorial to ensure that they receive tutorial support through the second year for their chosen routes.

There is a specialist information evening to explain more in May which will be clearly advertised on our college website.



Checklist for students

1. AS & A level results

We want to help students avoid disappointment by making sure they apply for suitable courses where they have realistic chance of being offered a place. Your son/daughter should contact their teachers/tutor to find out their predicted grades to aid their decision. The following checklist should help students in making their choice:

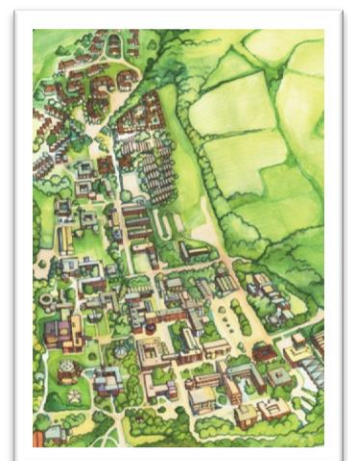
- Am I likely to come near the grades/points they are asking for?
- Do I meet the specific subject requirements for the course?

2. The course

- Does the course contain those aspects of the subject I definitely want to study and avoid those I do not want? Courses with the same course title at different universities often have very different course contents.
- Is the course taught and assessed in a way which suits me? Do I prefer lots of contact with the lecturers, or being left largely to my own devices? Do I prefer more course work assessment to almost total dependence on written examination assessment?
- What is the length of the course?
- How flexible is the course and how much choice do I have in what I study?
- Is there an opportunity for work placement as part of the course? If there is, will I have to find the placement myself or will the university find it?
- If I want sponsorship, can I get help from the university?
- Does the course lead to any professional qualifications which are recognised by the relevant professional bodies?
- What are the job prospects with a degree from this university?
- If I want to learn a foreign language do I have the opportunity?
- Are there opportunities to study part of the course abroad?

3. The University environment

- Do I want to be in a city, on the outskirts of a town or in the countryside?
- Do I require certain facilities such as a cinema, a theatre, an art gallery, a concert hall etc. to be nearby?
- How far is the university from my home? I'll need to get home sometimes for family events such as birthdays.
- How easy is it to get to the university by road or by public transport?



4. Accommodation

- ❑ Most universities guarantee first year accommodation but what do they mean by University accommodation and where exactly is it?
- ❑ If the accommodation is some way from the academic centre, how do I travel, how long does it take and how much does it cost?
- ❑ What help is there with accommodation after the first year?
- ❑ What form does the accommodation take? It can be in the 'in hall' system where meals are provided but will I find this restricting? If it is self-catering, will I starve?
- ❑ Will I have to share accommodation?
- ❑ What about cooking and laundry facilities?

5. Costs

- ❑ What is the cost of accommodation and what does it include? Do not assume that it is cheap to live in the North and expensive in the South.
- ❑ Will I be able to get a Saturday job if I want one to help with the finances?
- ❑ How much is it going to cost me to travel home?
- ❑ What are costs like in the Students' Union?
- ❑ What bursaries does the university offer?

6. Leisure

- ❑ If I'm interested in certain sports, what facilities does the university offer and are they within walking distance or ten miles away?
- ❑ Do I need to be near the sea or close to mountains to pursue my particular sporting interests?
- ❑ If I'm interested in music, can I join the orchestra or sing in the choir without being a music student?
- ❑ Are there opportunities to take up a new interest or sport and receive suitable coaching?
- ❑ If I'm interested in radio broadcasting or journalism, will I be able to work on the student radio or magazine?

7. Conclusion

Your son/daughter needs to have read the prospectus carefully and talked to some students if they are going to find all the answers. Remember also that their teachers and specialist tutors are there to help them.

Useful Guide

We recommend this guide as a useful first point of call.

<http://university.which.co.uk/advice/advice-for-parents>



Glossary – some definitions

Institutions

- ❑ **Higher Education Course** at an institution, which leads to a post advanced course qualification (E.g. Degree, Foundation Degree, Diploma in Higher Education, etc.)
- ❑ **University** Institution which provides primarily academic courses leading to degrees and in some cases other Higher Education qualifications (E.g. HND)
- ❑ **Oxbridge** The Universities of Oxford and Cambridge
- ❑ **Colleges and Institutes of Higher Education** A variety of institutions, which offer degrees validated by a local university.
- ❑ **Campus University** Style of more modern university design, where the university is situated on a green field site outside a city, has large grounds with all buildings, accommodation, lecture rooms, laboratories, Union buildings together (Surrey and Sussex are examples).
- ❑ **Collegiate University** A large traditional university comprising a group of colleges each of which has its own character and teaching staff (E.g. Oxford, Cambridge, Durham and York).
- ❑ **College of Technology/Technical College** Further Education institutions providing mostly vocational courses for full and part-time students for diploma or other certificated qualification. Some colleges also provide degree courses validated by a local university.
- ❑ **Russell Group** This is an association of 20 major research-intensive universities of the UK. These universities are Birmingham, Bristol, Cambridge, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Imperial College, King's College, Leeds, Liverpool, LSE, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham, Queen's (Belfast), Oxford, Sheffield, Southampton, UCL, Warwick.



Degree Structure

- ❑ **Single** One subject.
- ❑ **Joint** Two subjects studied equally.
- ❑ **Combined** Two or three subjects studied in varying proportions.
- ❑ **Foundation/Access/Conversion Course** One year course for students lacking appropriate A-level qualifications (does not necessarily guarantee progression to degree study).
- ❑ **Foundation Degree** These degrees were introduced in 2001 and are learning degrees delivered by further education colleges, universities and other training institutions working in partnership. Students will often study at a further or higher education college, but their degree will be validated by a university.
- ❑ **Modular** Self-contained units, minimum number required to be studied, mix and match.
- ❑ **Vocational** Directly linked to a career.
- ❑ **Sandwich** Practical experience included.
- ❑ **Sponsorship** Schemes by which some industrial and professional organisations find financial assistance for some courses. Competitive. May involve a commitment to working for the organisation
- ❑ **International element** Chance to study and work abroad.

Degrees studied in Scotland tend to be more modular and main subjects are not studied until the second year. <http://www.studyinScotland.org/find-a-university/>



UCAS

- ❑ **Adjustment** An acceptance route where applicants who have met and exceeded the conditions of their firm choice choose to take up an alternative offer.
- ❑ **Clearing** An acceptance route available late in the application cycle.
- ❑ **Conditional firm** An offer made by a provider dependent on achieving specified conditions which has been accepted by the applicant as their first choice.
- ❑ **Conditional offer** Offer made by provider depend on meeting specified conditions which may include academic and/or non-academic conditions.
- ❑ **Deferred Entry/Gap Year** 'A year off'. Application made in the coming academic year, but for entry in 2017.
- ❑ **Firm choice** An offer made by a provider confirmed by the applicant as their first choice. These can be either conditional (dependent on achieving specified conditions) or unconditional (applicant has met specified conditions and assumed to be accepted or placed at the provider).
- ❑ **Insurance choice** An offer made by a provider which has been confirmed by the applicant as their second choice, in case the conditions of the firm choice are not met. These can be either conditional (dependent specified requirements) or unconditional (no further requirements met).
- ❑ **Main scheme** The main UCAS application scheme through which up to five providers/courses can be applied to. This opens in September and closes to new applications on 30 June the following year.
- ❑ **Unconditional offer** Offer made by provider when it is satisfied that the applicant has met specific conditions.
- ❑ **UCAS** Universities Central Admissions System (based in Cheltenham). Central body which administers all university and most colleges of higher education applications.
- ❑ **UCAS Apply:** On-line application for applying for higher education courses.
- ❑ **UCAS Extra** Allows students who have received no offers or who have declined all offers to make additional choices in March
- ❑ **UCAS Track**
A system where applicants can track the progress of their applications online, reply to offers, and make certain amendments, e.g. change of email address.
- ❑ **Unconditional offer** Offer made by provider when it is satisfied that the applicant has met specific conditions.

BHASVIC University Application Timeline

<p>Spring Term 2017</p>	<p>Is HE for me? A1-A2 Transfer Higher Education/Specialist evenings for parents/carers Careers staff available UCAS Apply opens 24th May for Sept 2018 Entry</p>
<p>Summer Term 2017</p>	<p>Research skills / University focus in tutor Open days Careers Enrichment Day Careers staff available Intro to Personal Statements Help me write your reference</p>
<p>Autumn Term 2017</p>	<p>UCAS Apply – applications can be submitted 6th September College Internal Deadline for Oxbridge / Medics 15th September FINAL UCAS deadline for Oxbridge Medics deadline 15th October College Internal Deadline for all guaranteed UCAS applications Friday 24th November References and Personal Statements reviewed in tutor / Apply sessions</p>
<p>Spring Term 2018</p>	<p>FINAL UCAS Application deadline 15th January Focus in tutor on accommodation / Finance / Independent Living UCAS Extra opens 25th February FINAL UCAS Application deadline for art / design foundation courses 24th March (check individual institutions) Offers and replies</p>
<p>Summer Term 2018</p>	<p>Deadline for University replies and offers UCAS Apply - if you receive all decisions by 31st March, reply by 4th May UCAS Apply - 5th May Uni/college decisions due on applications submitted 15th Jan – 5th May UCAS Apply - If you receive all decisions by 5th May, reply by 8th June UCAS Clearing - Applications received after 30th June into Clearing UCAS Apply - Last date to apply in Extra – 4th July UCAS Clearing opens – 5th July</p>
<p>Results Day 2018</p>	<p>16^h August 2018 – BHASVIC Helpdesk opens UCAS Adjustment opens UCAS Apply 31st August Offer conditions must be met & Adjustment ends Final deadline for 2018 entry applications – 20th September 2018</p>