Stratford Upon Avon School

UCAS 2015

[Information for students]

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Aims

The aim of this booklet is to help you achieve your optimum University placement. This booklet is designed to help you succeed. It deals systematically with all the tasks required **of you** in the transition from school to university. You will need to invest time and effort in constructing your route through to University and beyond. This should be seen as the next step in your career path through life, and the earlier you start, the greater your chances of success.

The approach

- Consider what you want from a career and Higher Education.
- Gather information on careers and Higher Education
- Look at all your options eg Gap year with career-related company, working abroad, studying abroad, and look at what they might offer you.
- Get advice from staff, friends, family professional people, but remember **only you** can make the decision on what **you** want to do.

You MUST meet all your UCAS deadlines if your application is to proceed

The Schedule

19th September. All early applications (Oxbridge, Medicine, Dentistry, Vet Science) must be submitted to school.

26th September. All early application Personal Statements to be signed off by tutors

15th October. UCAS cut off for Oxbridge, Medicine, Dentistry, Vetinary Sciences.

24th October. All non-early Personal Statements to be signed off by tutors.

7th November. School deadline for UCAS applications

30th November. All applications sent to UCAS.

15th January. Final UCAS deadline for all applicants.

Mid Feb- end June. Extra available for applicants with no offers. If you are unsuccessful with your first application in Extra, you can apply on Track for further courses with vacancies.

31st March. Universities deadline date for replies

8th May. Applicant deadline date for acceptance. If no replies by this date UCAS will decline all offers on your behalf

Late Applications
Applications received between 16th January and 30th June are Late applications. Universities and colleges may only consider them if they have space on their courses.

30th June Applications received after this date will be entered into Clearing

13th August 2015 A level results day

Clearing is available from July to applicants who have completed an application but not secured a place. Courses with vacancies will be published at www.ucas.com from A level results day, and also listed in The Independent. Contact the institution direct to discuss your options and suitability for the course. When you give your UCAS clearing number to a university or college, they can view your application on line. If they offer you a place and you want to accept it, you do so via Clearing using the Track service at www.ucas.com

Adjustment is available if your results are better than expected. It allows you to reconsider where and what you want to study, whilst keeping your firm choice. Further details are available at www.ucas.com.

FOR MORE HELP ON THE ONLINE APPLICATION PROCESS PLEASE SEE THE SIXTH FORM OFFICE

KEY INFORMATION

The school number is **S13231L**

The school buzzword is **SuAS2015**

The fee code is **02** for most students

Some nursing degrees etc have a different code **05 or 08**

Useful Websites

www.ucas.com/students/apply/ - Register for UCAS

www.ucas.com – course searches/apply on line/general information and advice

www.ucas.com/open-days – an easy way to find out subject/university open days

www.unistats.direct.gov.uk – unbiased information and comparisons on universities, courses, job prospects etc.

Student Finance

www.studentfinance.direct.gov.uk – student finance information and applications

www.nhsstudentgrants.co.uk

SIX STEPS TO APPLYING TO UNIVERSITY

Step 1: Choosing courses

You can apply to any course which interests you, but consider the **entry requirements** first. Some courses require particular qualifications, others require an admissions test. There are thousands of courses available at hundreds of universities and colleges, and each one suits some people better than others. Choose your courses for the right reasons and do plenty of research before deciding where to go. Select courses with reasonably similar titles and/or content; diverging subject courses suggests that you may not be sure what you wish to study.

Step 2: Applying

You apply for courses using the online application system, ***Apply.*** http://www.ucas.com/ once complete, your application will be forwarded via the school to UCAS. UCAS will then forward on to the Universities you have chosen.

Step 3: Offers

Universities and colleges will decide whether to offer you a place or not. You can check if you're accepted on the online tracking system, ***Track***, which shows your choices and any decisions made by the universities and colleges. If you receive an offer you will need to reply before the published date. If you change your mind or aren't accepted, there are other options to help you find a course.

Step 4: Results

If you're waiting for results, be prepared for what happens next. Check ***Track*** to see if you're accepted on your chosen course. UCAS receive some exam results and send them to the universities and colleges. For others, you send them yourself. Your next steps depend on if you're accepted or not.

Step 5: Next steps

If you are accepted, you will receive a message from UCAS that explains what happens next. If you receive different grades than expected or change your mind, there are other options available. Check ***Track*** and look for course vacancies on the UCAS website to find an alternative place.

Step 6: Starting University or college

Make sure you have everything ready, such as accommodation, finances, travel arrangements, books and equipment required for the course. See what the students' union at your university or college has prepared for new students and find out what support is available while you're studying.

WHAT IS *APPLY*?

Apply allows you to apply online for full-time undergraduate courses at universities and colleges. You will need to complete the following sections.

- Registration
- Personal details
- Additional information (UK applicants only)
- Choices
- Education
- Employment
- Personal statement
- Reference
- Declaration
- Pay and send

Your application does not have to be completed all at once. The system allows you to leave a section partially completed so you can return to it later and change any information you have entered. You can log onto Apply anywhere you have access to the web.

- ## REGISTRATION

Use the web address http://www.ucas.com/students/apply/ and select register.

Type in the buzzword and enter your details as requested (PowerPoint presentation is on the school website).The registration process generates a username and you create your own password, which you will need to log in to your application. Make a note of your username and password and keep them in a safe place. *Apply* is case sensitive so please write the details exactly as they are shown on screen.

When you register, you will be asked to choose four security questions and enter relevant answers. If you forget your username or password, click on 'forgotten login?'. You will then need to enter your name and date of birth and answer two of your security questions correctly - your login details will then be displayed. The security questions can also be used to check your identity when you telephone the Customer Service Unit, so make the answers individual and memorable.

Once you have completed your application, click pay/send . The school will then be able to attach an academic reference, check and approve your application, sends it through the school checking process and once you have had final approval send the completed application to UCAS.

6

- **PERSONAL DETAILS**

Your title, gender, name and address and date of birth will be filled in automatically with the details provided during registration.

Further personal details

You are asked for extra information so that the universities and colleges can decide what tuition fees you should be charged and what entitlements you might be qualified to receive. They need to know your residential status, where/whether you will be looking for funding and/or sponsorship, and if you have any special needs or disabilities which they would need to consider.

As part of their duty of care to all applicants/existing students they will also need to know if you have any relevant criminal convictions. You are asked to tick a box if you **have** a relevant criminal conviction. If you do not, please leave the box blank.

Entering an email address

If you enter an email address, you need to verify that it is correct. You will receive an email containing instructions on what to do. Your email address needs to be verified before you can send your application to UCAS. They need your email address so that, once they have processed your application, they can send emails alerting you to changes to the status of your application, including decisions made by your chosen colleges or universities. These emails will not list the actual changes or give any decisions; they will tell you to log in to the [Track service](#) to view any changes.

Your email address will be seen by UCAS and the universities and colleges, so please make sure that it is sensible and does not cause offence

Nominated access

If you are likely to be away at any time during the application period, for example on a gap year, you may wish to nominate someone who can make decisions on your behalf and discuss your application with UCAS if necessary. This section of your application is not compulsory - you do not have to provide details if you do not wish to nominate anyone. If you do, you enter their name and their relationship to you. Universities and colleges have their own policies for discussing applications with third parties.

- **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

This section is only available in *Apply* to applicants who are permanently resident in the UK. If you have any concern as to how a university or college may use this data, if indeed they do use it, please see the university or college website or contact the institution for further details.

- ## **CHOICES**

You can choose up to five courses, which *Apply* will arrange into alphabetical order. The order of your choices does not indicate any preference order - your application will be sent to all chosen universities and colleges at the same time.
Each university and college will only see details of their course or courses for which you have applied. They will not see your other choices until you have received your final decision.

You don't have to add five choices - There's space for five choices, but you don't have to use them all - you can apply for just one if you know exactly where you want to go. Don't apply for courses you don't want to do. If you apply to fewer than five choices, you can add more later if you want to (but be aware of the deadlines for adding choices). This can be useful if you find a new course after you've sent your application.

The combination of choices allowed depends upon your chosen course(s)

You can apply to a maximum of:
- Four courses in any one of medicine/dentistry/veterinary medicine/veterinary science
- One course at either the University of Oxford or the University of Cambridge

You can use your remaining choice(s) for any other subject. For example, if you have made four choices for medicine, you could still make one choice for veterinary medicine. However, be aware that your personal statement will be sent to all universities and colleges you have chosen.

Additional requirements

Some courses require an admissions test. It is **your** responsibility to find out whether your chosen course(s) need you to take one, and to register by the relevant deadline. Visit the admissions test section on UCAS to find out more.

If you are applying for medicine, dentistry, nursing, midwifery or certain other health courses, UK health authorities recommend you should be immunised against Hepatitis B before you start training. Universities and colleges may also ask you for certificates to show that you are not infected. If you are applying for one or more of these subjects, you should check the immunisation and certification requirements with the universities and colleges you have chosen.

Some courses in fields such as social work will require that you undergo a check through the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and/or become a member of the Independent Safeguarding Authority or its Scottish equivalent. Check with the universities and colleges you have chosen for their requirements and advice on how to fulfil them.
For information on courses please check the Course Search section of the UCAS site.

- **EDUCATION**

Fill in details of your schools or colleges, then list your qualifications, one by one. You must include all schools, colleges and universities that you have attended since the age of 11, even if you withdrew from your course. There is space to enter up to 10 centres.

For each school and college, you must provide details of:

- all qualifications for which you have accepted certification from an awarding body, even if you are retaking all or part of the qualification
- all qualifications for which you are currently studying or for which you are awaiting results.

You must enter all your qualifications including any which were ungraded. You must also enter any exams you are still waiting to take and any for which you are waiting results.

Find out more information on the areas below by visiting the UCAS site.

Guidance on entering specific qualifications

Exam boards and awarding bodies

To list the qualifications click on the 'add qualification' link below each one and enter the qualifications you've taken, or are currently taking, at that center.

You might see a short list of qualifications that are relevant to you. Otherwise, you'll see that the qualifications are listed alphabetically on the A-Z list.

If you're re-sitting a qualification you need to enter it twice: once as a completed qualification with the grade achieved and once as a qualification with the result 'Pending'.

All qualifications have to be entered manually - you can't copy and paste in transcripts.

GCE qualifications (AS & A level, single & double award)

AS = GCE Advanced Subsidiary (First taken in 2001)

A2 = GCE Advanced level

BTEC = Ensure you have the **exact** name of the BTEC and level. You will also need your BTEC registration number from your subject teacher.

You must list **all** subjects that have been certificated at GCE AS level. This includes subjects which you are taking on to A level. You should include a subject even if you are re-sitting an AS unit to improve your A level grade.

If you have any doubts about the certification of your AS subjects, please speak to the Sixth Form Office.

It is optional whether or not you state modules for AS and A2.However, some universities may state in their entry requirements that they want to see module results so **you must check**.

The following scenarios should help you to enter your qualifications correctly.

- o **Your AS levels were certificated in 2014**
  Enter your AS subject and the grade achieved, with the achieved unit results.

- o **Your AS levels were certificated in 2014, and you are retaking some/all units to achieve a higher overall grade**
  Enter your AS subject and grade achieved in 2014 with the achieved unit results. Then, enter the AS level again for 2015 (to cover the re-sit) with the pending unit grades, even if you are taking the subject on to A level.

- o **Entering your A2 Level**
  When entering your pending A2 level, enter the additional units for your A level as pending.

- o **Music, dance, drama or speech qualifications**
  If you have music qualifications, such as ABRSM or equivalents, dance qualifications, such as RAD or equivalents, drama or speech qualifications, such as LAMDA, only enter each subject once with the highest grade you achieved.

- o **Open University credits**
  In the title box, enter the programme code, the programme title and the number of credit points for all the Open University programmes you have completed or for which you are studying, for example, S103 Discovering Science 60 points.

- o **Your highest level of qualification**

  You'll be asked to select the highest level of qualification you will have before you start your course. This doesn't include the course you're applying to - it's just about the qualifications that you'll complete before starting the course. There are three options available in a drop-down list: Yours will be - **Below honours degree level**, eg AS and A level.

- **EMPLOYMENT**

Give brief details of up to five employers, including company name and Town, a description of your job, and start and finish dates. You will also be asked to say whether you worked full- or part-time. This includes weekend and holiday jobs.

If your work experience has been unpaid, add 'W EX' to the description line and include the details in your personal statement.

10

- **PERSONAL STATEMENT**

This is one of the most important sections of the form. The personal statement is your opportunity to tell universities and colleges about your suitability for the course(s) that you hope to study. You need to demonstrate your enthusiasm and commitment, and above all, ensure that you stand out from the crowd.

Some course tutors find personal statements crucial when making decisions, whereas others might not put as much emphasis on them. Since you do not know who will be looking at your statement, the safest thing is to do a good job. In many cases, applicants are not interviewed, so this may be your only chance to make the case for you to be offered a place. Remember that the person reading your statement is an expert in your chosen area of interest so they will want to know the reasons why you have chosen the subject.

You can enter up to **4,000 characters** (this includes spaces) or **47 lines** of text (this includes blank lines), whichever comes first. You do not have to use all the space provided. You cannot use *italics*, **bold**, underlining or foreign characters (such as á, ë, õ) in your personal statement - the system will automatically remove these when saved.

Points to consider when writing your personal statement

The more academic the course and institutions you are applying to, the more 'academic' your personal statement must be: e.g. English at Bristol is going to be 90% about your school academic excellence, but Nursing at Chester will require more about your extra-curricular experience such as work experience.

Explain why you want to study the course you are applying for. If you mention your personal interests and hobbies, try to link them to the skills and experience required for the course.

This may be your only written work that the course tutor sees before making a decision: make sure it is organised and literate. Get the grammar, spelling and punctuation right. A statement filled with errors will give a negative impression of your skills and the effort you have put in to being accepted. Your statement must be written in English

Your statement will be more convincing and personal if you write about why an experience, activity or interest makes you a good candidate for the course. Include enough additional information to make it interesting and to demonstrate your own interest. Rather than making a statement such as

'I enjoy badminton'

Try to provide context and show what you have learnt

'I play badminton twice a week with a club that plays in local competitions and I play in both singles and doubles matches. Doubles matches requires good team working, an ability to support your partner, to devise a game plan but be able to adapt it as required and fast reactions. I enjoy the social side of the club and take responsibility for organising the social activities and fundraising events. This gives me an opportunity to develop my organisational and planning skills. Fitting in all these

11

activities while keeping up with my academic studies demands good time management and I think I do that very well.'

If you are applying for a joint degree you will need to explain why you are interested in both aspects of this joint programme. If you are applying for different subjects or courses, you need to identify the common themes and skills that are relevant to your choices. For example, both mathematics and law are subjects where you have to think logically and apply rules. You may like both subjects because you enjoy solving problems, using theory and natural or man-made laws to come to a correct conclusion.

If your chosen courses cannot be linked by a common theme, think about your reasons for applying to such varied courses.

Some statements start with quotes, some include jokes, some set out to be unusual or eye-catching. Sometimes it works, but it might have the opposite effect to what you hoped. The admissions decision maker may not share your sense of humour so be careful when trying to make your statement stand out.

What to include

Below are some suggestions of what to include in your personal statement. These are guidelines only so don't worry if some of the suggestions do not apply to you.

- Why you have chosen the course(s) - particularly important when applying for a subject that you have not studied before.
- The reasons why that subject area interests you.
- Evidence that you understand what is required to study the course, eg if/how your current or previous studies relate to the course(s) you have chosen.
- Any activities that demonstrate your interest in the course(s).
- Why you want to go to university or college.
- Details of jobs, placements, work experience or voluntary work, particularly if it's relevant to your chosen course(s).
- Hobbies, interests and social activities that demonstrate your skills and abilities.
- Details of non-accredited skills and achievement which you have gained through activities such as:
    - ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) awards,
      for example, Universities Award
    - Diploma of Achievement
    - Duke of Edinburgh Award
    - OCNW Level 3 Certificate in Personal Development for Progression (previously known as the Liverpool Enrichment Programme)
    - Millennium Volunteers Scheme
    - v 50Hour Award
    - WorldWide Volunteering Certificate of Volunteering Achievement
    - Young Enterprise.
- Details of accreditation achieved for any activities in preparation for higher education, for example through the ASDAN Aimhigher Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (CoPE qualification).
- Any other achievements that you are proud of, eg reaching grade 3 piano or being selected for the county cricket team.

12

- Positions of responsibility that you hold/have held both in and out of school, eg form prefect or representative for a local charity.
- Attributes that make you interesting, special or unique.
- Whether you have any future plans of how you want to use the knowledge and experience that you gain.

Dos and don'ts when constructing your personal statement

Do create a list of your ideas before attempting to write the real thing.

Do expect to produce several drafts before being totally happy.

Do ask people you trust for their feedback.

Do check university and college prospectuses, websites and Entry Profiles, as they usually tell you the criteria and qualities that they want their students to demonstrate.

Do use your best English and **don't** let spelling and grammatical errors spoil your statement.

Do be enthusiastic - if you show your interest in the course, it may help you get a place.

Don't feel that you need to use elaborate language. If you try too hard to impress with long words that you are not confident using, the focus of your writing may be lost.

Don't say too much about things that are not relevant - if you think that you are starting to, take a break and come back to your statement when you feel more focused.

Don't lie - if you exaggerate you may get caught out at interview when asked to elaborate on an interesting achievement.

Don't rely on a spellchecker as it will not pick up everything - proof read as many times as possible.

Don't leave it to the last minute - your statement will seem rushed and important information could be left out.

Don't expect to be able to write your personal statement whilst watching TV or surfing the internet - this is your future, so make the most of the opportunity to succeed.

You should prepare your personal statement offline using a word-processing package and copy and paste it into the *Apply* system. Whether you are typing your statement directly into the box, or amending a statement that you pasted in, you should click 'save' regularly because *Apply* will time-out after 35 minutes of inactivity. The countdown on the screen displays how much time you have left before it times out.

You will need to get your Personal Statement signed off by your tutor before sending your form through to the school for the attachment of the school reference. It is therefore important that you speak to them at regular intervals and seek their advice if needed.

TIPS ON, AND EXAMPLES OF, PERSONALSTATEMENTS

Admissions tutors will be asking themselves two main questions
- Do we want this student on this course?
- Do we want this student at this university?

      - Is the student suited to, and sufficiently interested in, the course that they are applying for?
      - Does the student have the necessary qualifications and qualities for the course?
      - Is the student conscientious, hardworking and unlikely to drop out?
      - Will the student do their best and cope with the demands of the course?
      - Can the student work under pressure?
      - Will the student be able to adjust to their new environment at university?
      - What are their communications skills like?
      - Are they dedicated to this course and have researched it well?

You need to include:

What you want to study and why:
- specific aspects of the courses that interest you
- examples of coursework you have completed
- practical work you have enjoyed
- things you have read related to the subject area
- work experience or voluntary work in this area
- conferences you have attended
- personal experiences which led to the decision to take this subject
- where you hope a degree in this subject will lead

Experiences that show you are a reliable and responsible person:
- part time job
- business enterprise
- community and charity work
- sixth form committee
- helping out at school events and open days
- Young Enterprise, World Challenge, Duke of Edinburgh Award, Asdan Award, etc, and what you have gained from these experiences

Your interests and skills:
- what you like to do in your spare time
- sport and leisure activities
- subjects you study which are not examined
- musical instrument which you play
- languages which you speak
- prizes you have won or positions achieved in your interests

Gap year:
- why you are taking a gap year
- why you want to take a gap year
- what you plan to do
- how this may relate to your course

14

PLAIGARISM

Whilst it is very useful to look at examples of personal statements to get an idea of how to put together a good statement, it is important that you **DO NOT** copy any content from an example into your own statement.

UCAS have a very sophisticated, specialist system that checks for plagiarism and this system will pick up ANY similarities to statements that have previously been submitted to UCAS. If a similarity is picked up, this will be immediately highlighted to the institutions that you are applying to who will then make their own decisions based on this information.

- ## PAY & SEND

Paying for your application

There is a fee for making an application for higher education. The amount depends upon how many courses, universities and colleges you apply to.

How much will it cost?

If you choose to apply to more than one course, university or college, the cost is £23
If you only apply to one course at one university or college, you pay £12.

How do I pay?

You will need to pay by credit or debit card online. If you apply to one course and pay the reduced application fee, then wish to add further choices to your application after it has been sent to UCAS, you will have to pay the additional fee directly to UCAS.

If you are having trouble paying for your application, please contact the Customer Service Unit for information on alternative methods of payment.

When do I need to pay?

You pay after you have completed your application and are in the process of sending it to the school. You will be asked for your card details once you have agreed to the terms of the declaration and data protection statement. The system will automatically know whether you should pay the full or the single choice fee.

Please remember that you can only complete one application in each cycle. If you send a second application, it will be cancelled and you will not receive a refund.