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**Student Guide 2020/2021**

**Name:**

**Tutor Group:**

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1. **Introduction**

This guide is for you to use during your time at Beechen Cliff Sixth Form to help you decide your career path, find out more about the variety of post-18 options such as work, apprenticeships and university, and learn about the application process for these.

Choosing a university course, apprenticeship or career is a very exciting part of being in the Sixth Form. Our **Future Horizons** programme has the following three aims:

1. To inspire and educate you to be aspirational about your future;
2. To help you understand your choices when you leave the Sixth Form; and
3. To explain the steps you need to take to realise your aspirations.

In your lifetime it is likely that you will change career paths many times, focusing on gaining knowledge, skills and experience in areas that interest you will therefore assist with sound decision making and personal fulfilment. We aim to help you make these informed decisions by creating as many opportunities as possible to meet with or experience professions from a broad range of industries and job sectors.

It is important for you to take personal ownership of decisions: whilst school, parents and peers are here to inform, help and mentor, the responsibility for UCAS applications, applying for work experience and extending academic and career knowledge outside of the classroom is yours. Please take advantage of the opportunities and advice available, both inside and outside school.

Your first port of call for advice is your tutor, but the whole Sixth Form team understand the journey you are embarking on very well and have experience and advice to offer. Please do not hesitate to talk to any of us at any time, and if you would like further individual advice and guidance, please talk to Miss Mather.

Best wishes,



Miss K Mather

*Future Horizons and UCAS Lead*

1. **Super Curricular Planning and Records**

Universities and employers look for evidence of independent learning outside the A Level curriculum in a UCAS application. Ask your teachers for reading lists or recommended books for their subject to help you with this, as well as checking the Super Curricular section of the **Future Horizons newsletter** which highlights external sources of study and lectures, in addition to our own **Super Curricular Lecture Series**. It is important to let your tutor know which events you have attended so that we can mark your attendance in our Sixth Form Tracker.

Sources of information:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| • Lectures / Talks • Books / articles• TV / radio programmes• Websites / YouTube channels  | * Plays / performances

• Subject-relevant clubs / societies • Newspapers• Trips / visits |

My evidence of Super Curricular activities:

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1. **Career Insights Programme Records**

As part of our Future Horizons Programme, we have endeavoured to invite guest speakers into school on a weekly or biweekly basis to talk informally to students about their careers and job sectors. A key aim of our careers provision is to give students the chance to meet local employers and employees from a range of industries. The Career Insights programme offers this opportunity. To allow tutors to track how many of these talks you have been to, please make a record of which talks you have been to and what you learnt. Having a record of this will also help you recall what talks you have been to when it comes to mentioning these at interviews or applications in the future.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Careers Talk 1** |  |
| **Careers Talk 2** |  |
| **Careers Talk 3** |  |
| **Careers Talk 4** |  |
| **Careers Talk 5** |  |
| **Other careers talks**  |  |

1. **Career Inspiration**

**Motivation**

Everyone works for money however it is not the only significant motivator. Every individual has different motivations for working but all people work because work provides something that they need. Choosing a career that includes the right motivators for you will improve your morale and the quality of your life.

**TASK:** Rate the following common motivators:

High Income (High 1 2 3 4 5 Low)

Seeing the World (High 1 2 3 4 5 Low)

Stable family life (High 1 2 3 4 5 Low)

Flexible hours (High 1 2 3 4 5 Low)

Being your own boss (High 1 2 3 4 5 Low)

Love of the day to day work (High 1 2 3 4 5 Low)

Personal and professional fulfilment (High 1 2 3 4 5 Low)

Accomplishing goals (High 1 2 3 4 5 Low)

Contributing to /Creating something large & important (High 1 2 3 4 5 Low)

Personal missions accomplished through meaningful work (High 1 2 3 4 5 Low)

Love the clients you serve (High 1 2 3 4 5 Low)

Camaraderie and interaction with others/teams (High 1 2 3 4 5 Low)

Filling time with activity, maybe outdoors (High 1 2 3 4 5 Low)

Seeking change, challenge and diverse problems to solve (High 1 2 3 4 5 Low)

**Inspiration - Popular Degrees**

Accounting & finance

Aerospace engineering

Agriculture

American studies

Animal science and management

Animation

Anthropology

Archaeology

Architecture

Biochemistry

Biology

Biomedical sciences

Building & Construction

Business management

Chemical engineering

Chemistry

Civil engineering

Classics

Computer science

Creative writing

Criminology

Dance

Dentistry

Drama

Early childhood studies

Economics

Education

Electrical/Electronic Eng

English

Environmental science

Events management

Fashion

Film production

Film studies

Fine art

Food science

Forensic science

Games design

Genetics

Geography

Geology

Graphic design

Health studies

History

History of art

Hospitality management

Human resource management

Illustration

Information systems

Interior design

International business

International relations

Journalism

Landscape design

Law

Linguistics

Marketing

Materials science and engineering

Mathematics

Mechanical engineering

Media studies

Medical sciences

Medicine

Microbiology

Modern languages

Music

Nursing

Nutrition

Occupational therapy

Performing arts

Pharmacology

Pharmacy

Philosophy

Photography

Physics

Physiology

Physiotherapy

Politics

Product design

Psychology

Public relations

Quantity surveying

Real estate

Social policy

Social work

Sociology

Software engineering

Sport & exercise science

Sport and leisure management

Sports coaching

Statistics

Television production

Textile design

Theology & Religious studies

Travel and tourism

Urban planning

Veterinary medicine

Web design & development

Youth and community work

Zoology

**Inspiration - Popular Industry Sectors**

* Accountancy, banking and finance
* Business, consulting & management
* Charity and voluntary work
* Creative arts and design
* Energy and utilities
* Engineering and manufacturing
* Environment and agriculture
* Healthcare including Medicine
* Hospitality and events management
* Information technology
* Information, research and analysis
* Law
* Law enforcement and security
* Leisure, sport and tourism
* Marketing, advertising and PR
* Media and internet
* Property and construction
* Public services and administration
* Recruitment and HR
* Retail
* Sales
* Science and pharmaceuticals
* Social care
* Teaching and education
* Transport and logistics

**TASK:** Identify at least TWO sectors and TWO degrees from the lists above or of your own choosing. Fill out the table below with your research from the websites below. Look at job profiles and career prospects from particular degrees.
Prospects – [www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk), Career Pilot – [www.careerpilot.co.uk](http://www.careerpilot.co.uk)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Degree  | Industry | Career  |
| *e.g. Geography* | *Environment & Agriculture* | *Forest/woodland manager* |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

1. **Work Experience**

**Have you an idea of what career you would like to pursue?**

Having a career aspiration beyond education will help you decide what further education or training you may wish to take, including courses at university. Undertaking work experience is key to setting these goals and is also highly sought after by employers. Research has shown that only 5% of employers consider themselves ‘very likely’ to employ a graduate with no work experience (High Flyers, 2019).

The school assists but does not organise work experience placements; it is up to you to research and approach employers directly. When seeking work experience some employers are more likely to respond to a request for shadowing rather than work experience, as this can be less onerous for employers. Also, whilst some employers may offer you a week or so of experience, others may not be able to provide more than a day, but any amount of time is valuable.

**Finding an Employer for Work Experience**

* Internet searches
* Ask your friends and family, share contacts within your tutor group
* Ask employers that visit the school as part of the Future Horizons programme, either at the Showcase or at Careers Insight talks.

**TASK:** Using the internet, type in the type of career or sector you are thinking about, and the geographic area e.g. ‘Surveyor in Bath’. Note some potential employers to contact below:

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**Contacting the Employer**

Once you’ve found something you would like to know more about you need to find out who to write to. A quick phone call is the best way: call the main number on the website and ask who would be best to contact regarding work experience, and ask for their email address.

Pointers for your phone call:

* Ask if you have the right company
* Introduce yourself and explain why you are phoning
* Ask if they provide students with work experience or the possibility of shadowing someone in the organisation
* Ask for the contact details, email and mobile number, of the appropriate person

**Writing to the Employer**

Send an email to your contact and attach your CV. For example:

Dear xxx

I am writing to ask about the possibility of work experience within your organisation in July or August 2020. I am currently at Beechen Cliff Sixth Form studying for A Levels in ……………… and am hoping to attend university to study ………………… with a desire to pursue a career in ……………………….. at the end of my education. I would like to work in this sector because ……………………………………………….... Having researched possible employers I came across [*name of company*] and would like to find out more about what you do and whether a career in …………… is right for me. Any amount of time at your organisation would be appreciated. I have attached a CV showing my personal details and qualifications. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

*A. Student*

Mobile: *099999999*

Email: *astudent@beechencliff.org.uk*

**Work Experience Record**

Please make sure your tutor knows when you have applied for and scheduled work experience placements.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Employer 1 |  |
| Type of work |  |
| Date completed |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Employer 2 |  |
| Type of work |  |
| Date completed |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Employer 3 |  |
| Type of work |  |
| Date completed |  |

1. **Curriculum Vitae**

A CV provides information to a prospective employer/work experience placement about your skills, experience, education and interests. You need to make sure you adapt your CV to make it relevant to each job or placement you apply for, but it is a good idea to have a generic one that you can base this on. A typical structure is as follows:

|  |
| --- |
| **Name and Contact Details**You need to include your full name, email and phone number**Education** A list of the secondary schools and dates you have attended, your current studies and your GCSE results. Include your current (most recent) qualifications first with predicted grades if possible**Employment & Work Experience**A list of employer(s) and your roles and responsibilities, most recent first. You can also include work experience placements you have gained.**Relevant Skills**A bullet point list of your key skills and how you acquired them.**Other Achievements**A list of any awards or achievements you have received in or outside school.**Referees**Two people and their contact details. Usually Mr Oldham or your tutor and an employer or professional who knows you well |

**TASK**: Fill in the template based on your own CV, using skills relevant to a career you’d like to pursue or apply for.

**Name, Contact Details**

**Education**

**Employment & Work Experience**

**Relevant Skills**

●

●

●

●

**Other Achievements**

●

●

●

**Referees**

**What are my post-18 options?**

The majority of students at Beechen Cliff go to university to continue their education However, it is important to highlight that there are a number of other options including foundation degrees, apprenticeships and HND’s.

1. **Apprenticeships**

All apprenticeships are real jobs so all apprentices earn a salary. You must be paid at least the national minimum apprenticeship wage – and many employers pay significantly more. Apprentices will also receive training either through the employer, an external body, a college or university. An apprenticeship takes between one and five years to complete, depending upon the level of apprenticeship and the industry sector.

The training/education is specifically tailored to ensure you develop the skills the employer wants, giving apprentices a real advantage in the workplace. This means that apprentices not only have better long term salary prospects, but they also have excellent progression opportunities, whether looking to study further or climb the ranks within the workplace.

There are several levels of apprenticeships which include higher and degree apprenticeships.

**Higher** Levels 4, 5, 6 and 7 Foundation degree and above

**Degree** Levels 6 and 7 Bachelor’s or Master’s degree

There are many ways to find an apprenticeship, either by using the government website or sponsored websites or by contacting employers directly. It is important for students to not under estimate the amount of time, research and preparation that is required to successfully secure a good apprenticeship, the variety and quality of schemes varies and it is important to ask about training and future prospects.

Please find a list of example Higher and Degree Level apprenticeship providers on the following page to get an idea of the variety of employers and job sectors.



**TASK:** Have a look at the following websites and look through the current apprenticeship vacancies. Are there any that would interest you? What entry requirements do they have?

[**https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship**](https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship)

[**https://careerfinder.ucas.com/jobs/apprenticeship/**](https://careerfinder.ucas.com/jobs/apprenticeship/)

[**https://www.notgoingtouni.co.uk/apprenticeships-223**](https://www.notgoingtouni.co.uk/apprenticeships-223)

Examples of apprenticeships that would suit my interests and skillset:

………………………………………………………………………………………………….

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Students can apply directly for degree apprenticeships in addition to the five choices of courses at university places via UCAS. Students sometimes attend the same course at the same university as non-apprentices but will work at the business either one or two days a week or in the holidays. The advantage of this is that employers pay all tuition fees and the student has a salary of around £18k and no student debt. A large number of technology, computing and engineering degrees are available as well as an increasingly large number of other subjects, as well as sponsorship via the armed forces.

Due to the highly competitive nature of degree apprenticeships, we would recommend that you also apply for an undergraduate degree at a university via UCAS so that you have a backup option.

Some examples of recommended apprenticeships which are local to Bath:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Wessex Water | <https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/Careers/Apprenticeships>  |
| Bishop Fleming | <http://www.bishopflemingjobs.co.uk/graduates-trainees/> |
| Dyson  | <https://careers.dyson.com/early-careers/school-leavers/> |
| PWC  | <https://www.pwc.co.uk/careers/school-jobs/jobs.html> |
| Airbus | <http://company.airbus.com/careers/apprentices-and-pupils/In-the-United-Kingdom.html> |
| Rotork PLC | https://www.rotork.com/en/careers/apprentice-scheme-bath |
| Rolls-Royce Plc. | <http://careers.rolls-royce.co.uk/united-kingdom/apprentices-and-school-leavers> |

**Higher National Diplomas and Higher National Certificates**

Both courses are undergraduate qualifications and are designed to prepare you for a specific career such as accountancy or computing. An HND is a work-related course provided by higher and further education colleges. A full-time HND takes two years to complete, or three to four years part-time. Generally an HND is the equivalent to two years at university. A full-time HNC takes one year to complete, or two years part-time. Many HNC courses cover the same subjects as an HND, but an HNC is one level below an HND (it's generally equivalent to the first year at university).

1. **Degree Courses**

**Foundation Degrees**

Foundation degrees are ideal if you’re unsure about taking a full degree or if you want to study while you work. Whether you’re working in or towards the role now, you can gain professional and technical skills to further your career – within a shorter time frame than a full degree. They usually take two years full-time to complete or longer for part-time students. Normally you can continue for a further year to gain a full honours degree, which is useful if you decide to go for a full degree after all. Applications are made via UCAS.

**Undergraduate degrees**

You have two main questions to ask yourself when you are applying to university:

1. What **course** do you want to do?

2. **Where** do you want to do it?

Choosing the correct course is the most important part of your research; you are going to spend three or more years studying it and you need to be sure you will be successful and enjoy it. The key terms glossary in Appendix 1 should help you with some of the terminology associated with the university application process, and the websites in Appendix 2 will help you, with the UCAS website being the most important to get your head round first.

You can choose up to five courses on your UCAS application. Usually these are five similar courses from five different universities. However, it can include different courses at the same university if you wish, or a range of totally different courses.

Please make sure you read the UCAS Apply 2021 Guide in the following pages for comprehensive advice and guidance on the university application process.

1. **UCAS Guide: Apply 2021**

The following pages provides you with our guide to applying to university through UCAS. As well as this, there is lots of information available online, particularly on the UCAS website – and you should see it as just one of your resources for helping you with the process.

**Key UCAS Events & Deadlines**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Jan – Apr** | * UCAS Information Morning – 26th February
* UCAS Fair at Bath University – 9th March
* Initial course research
* University open days
* Super curricular activities
* Work experience planning
 |
| **Jun – Aug** | * Course research
* University open days
* Work experience
* Personal statement planning
* Register an account for Apply 2021 on UCAS website
 |
| **September** | * Most personal details sections of UCAS application completed
* 5 - 10 universities/courses shortlisted
* Personal statement draft handed to tutor for feedback
* Oxbridge/Medicine personal statement draft sent to Miss Mather or Mr Oldham for feedback
 |
| **October** | * 15th October - Oxbridge/Medicine application deadline
* Predicted grades published
 |
| **November** | * 30th November - All applications completed and sent to the school via the UCAS website for references to be added
 |
| **January** | * 15th January – Formal UCAS deadline for all applications
 |

**Notes**

* These deadlines are the latest dates by which you should do the above: all applications will be dealt with on a first-come first-serve basis and you can complete parts of the application in any order.
* It is very important that you talk to teachers about predicted grades when you return in the Upper Sixth. You should be making course and university choices that are ambitious but realistic given your predicted grades.
* The school sends the application to UCAS, not you. You must therefore complete your application before sending it to the school via the UCAS website. The school can return the application if there is an error and you must then re-submit.
* The UCAS process does not end in November; you may be invited to interview and when you have all your offers in spring 2018 you will need to make a firm and an insurance choice.
* You will also need to apply separately for student finance from February and then look into accommodation. There will be guidance on this nearer the time

**Course Investigation**

Choosing the correct course is the most important part of your research. The websites in Appendix 3 will help you, with the UCAS website being the most important to get your head round first. Below are four of activities to help you learn to navigate it:

**TASK 1**:Go to the **UCAS website and use the course search tool**. Type in: History, Go down to University of Birmingham as an example.

How many History courses are there? …………………………………………..

Write down three examples and what the entry requirements are:

1. ……………………………………………………………

2. ……………………………………………………………

3. ……………………………………………………………

**TASK 2**: Find 3 university subjects which are not A level subjects:

1. ……………………………………………………………

2. ……………………………………………………………

3. ……………………………………………………………

**TASK 3**: Find the entry requirements for each of the following courses:

1. Medicine at Bristol :

2. Creative Writing at Bath Spa :

3. Chemical Engineering at Brunel :

4. Mathematics at Portsmouth :

5. Nursing at University of West of England :

6. Psychology at Gloucester :

**TASK 4**: Choose a subject and find out how many universities offer that course.

Subject: Number of universities:

**How to choose a University / Course**

You have two main questions to ask yourself when you are applying to university:

* What course do you want to do?
* Where do you want to do it?

The most important choice should be your course – you are going to spend three or more years studying it and you need to be sure you will be successful and enjoy it.

You can choose up to **five** courses on your UCAS application. Usually these are five similar courses from five different universities. However, it can include different (although related) courses at the *same* university if you wish. You should narrow down to one course choice as you can only write one personal statement which should be subject specific.

**TASK**: Answer the questions below to start thinking about courses.

1. List any vocational course(s) e.g. medicine, architecture you might be interested in.
2. List any professional accreditation you might want to gain through your degree e.g. accountancy.
3. List any academic course(s) e.g. history, biology you might be interested in.
4. Would you consider applying for a course(s) that are 4 years long, gaining you a Master’s degree as well?
5. Do you want to apply to a Russell Group / Oxbridge university?
6. Are there any universities which are particularly good for the course(s) in which you are interested? List them below.
7. Is there anywhere (region, city) you would particularly like (or not like) to study?
8. Would you prefer a campus or city university?
9. Do you have any other criteria you wish to consider when choosing a university e.g. cost of living / links with industry?
10. Would you be interested in studying abroad?

**Open Days and Records**

Open days can be very important for getting the feel for a university, for understanding courses better and for exploring cities / campuses and all they have to offer.

University and course-specific open days can be found on university websites, on [www.opendays.com/calendar](http://www.opendays.com/calendar) and on the UCAS website. Below is a map of some of the cities/towns with large universities. Plan your open days by region, you may be able to do two in a day:

Use the table below to fill in some dates of open days you would like to attend:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Date | University | Course(s) |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
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|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

**Personal Statement Advice**

Universities will consider three things when deciding whether to make you an offer:

* Your academic record (GCSE grades and Predicted Grades)
* Your personal statement
* Your reference (written by your teachers)

Some universities invite you for an interview or ask for a portfolio before making an offer.

Securing the best possible grades throughout the Lower Sixth should be your priority so that your teachers are confident in predicting you strong grades in your application. Your personal statement then needs to contain evidence that you are genuinely excited about higher study i.e. you can prove it, not just say it. It is your opportunity to sell yourself and explain why you will make an ideal candidate for the course.

A personal statement is called a *personal* statement for a reason. There can be a temptation to look up examples of ‘good personal statements’ and try to use this as a basis for your own. Whilst doing some research and activities, such as below, to get an idea of a good personal statement can help, you should be careful not to use someone else’s as a basis for yours. Universities also use software to check for plagiarism (copying others’ work) so you certainly **should not copy phrases** from someone else’s!

That said, we can offer some guidelines for writing a person statement:

1. Explain what **motivates/interests you** about your chosen subjectbeyond your A Levels e.g. super curricular activities, current debates, or parts of your course you have particularly enjoyed and read more about
2. Describe your **suitability** for the course e.g. skills, knowledge from past studies, experiences.
3. **Link** aspects of your studies and other activities e.g. relevance of maths to psychology or an idea in physics that you saw taken a step further at university lecture OR application of knowledge in a work experience placement.
4. Use your **extra-curricular** activities to demonstrate your ability to cope with university life e.g. time management / having a balanced set of interests.
5. If applicable, talk about your **future plans or ideas** (these do not have to be set in stone, but you can give an idea about potential careers / fields of work)

**Personal Statement - Top Tips**

* Make sure your **spelling, punctuation and grammar** are accurate.
* Be **enthusiastic** and don’t be afraid to talk about your **strengths.**
* Don’t **exaggerate**! You could get caught out at a later date.
* **Show, don’t tell** i.e. you can say you are interested in something but it is better to show it with an example(s).
* Avoid **clichés** e.g. “Ever since I was a child, I have always wanted to study Economics.”
* Be very careful using **quotes from others** i.e. only use it if you can offer some analysis of it and relate it closely to your personal ideas.
* Be careful using **humour -** unfortunately an admissions officer might not share yours!

You should expect to write 3-4 drafts of your personal statement.

The key is to plan your statement well before you start writing. The first draft is the hardest so set aside a good chunk of time to get this done. Writing the first paragraph is often difficult. Our advice would be to write something off the top of your head (i.e. don’t worry too much about making it perfect at this point) then come back to it at the end once you have written the rest of it.

Remember, the personal statement is what will make you stand out. Many other students applying to university will have a similar academic profile to you; you need to show why you would be a better undergraduate than them.

Below is an activity to help you think about a good personal statement. Read through the examples and decide whether you think they would be good to read in a personal statement.

**Personal Statement Extracts**:

Lollipops and watermelons - that's what got me into Spanish.

Deficits, wars and scandal: this seems to be the current interpretation of politics today.

…I particularly like the way Jason Stearns does this in his book, Dancing in the Glory of Monsters. Taking Arendt's theory of the banality of evil as his starting point, he explores the horrific events in the Congo…

I have a part time job as a waitress.

'Now' is a point at a precise time and therefore it is no longer 'Now' one second later. Presentists would argue that only the present moment exists and therefore we can only be certain of 'Now'.

**Good and bad examples**

Growing up, Kerouac's ‘On the Road’ was personally inspiring to me as a tale of youth, personal freedom and expression in a culturally dynamic environment.

I am a really sociable person.

I secured a work experience placement with Bath University pharmacology department, during which I ran NMR samples, developing my understanding of the use of solvents such as CDCl3

Making an evacuation suitcase at the age of nine made me realise for the first time how historical events had affected real people.

Growing up in post-Soviet Belarus I wasn’t surrounded by architectural wonders – all the buildings were dull and grey, therefore my early childhood was spent designing the houses of my dreams.

Maths has been a passion of mine since I was 5 years old.

For extra-curricular activity, I have done 10 Tors, Gold DofE, Centurion, mountaineering, volunteering with younger students, played rugby, football, hockey and cricket…

To develop my understanding of Polar regions, I attended a lecture entitled ‘Contested Arctic’ run by the British Geographical Association. I was struck by…

I am currently studying Geography A Level and am particularly enjoying learning about immigration.

**TASK: From the statements on the previous page, can you identify the good and the bad statements.**

Good statements…

Bad statements…

Statements you would revise and how you would do this…

**Personal Statement Template**

**TASK**: Use the outline below for planning what you would write in a personal statement, which usually is 4 – 6 paragraphs long, containing up to **4000 characters** (including spaces).

|  |
| --- |
| ‘The hook’ – Why do you want to study this course? |
| Super curricular discussion of A Level knowledge and wider reading |
| Work experience or relevant skills |
| Work experience or relevant skills |
| Extra-curricular activities |

**NB** The extra-curricular activities box is smaller than the rest! Universities want you for your academic credentials above and beyond anything else. Extra-curricular activities should prove something about your ability to be successful at university e.g. independence / teamwork / responsibility

**Filling out your UCAS Application**

There is lots of guidance on the UCAS website about this, however every year we see common mistakes/omissions. To avoid these you should:

1. Link your application to the school in order to get a reference from us. This you do when you create a UCAS account and are asked to ‘link to a centre’. You will then be asked the **buzzword** which will be ‘beechensixth’.
2. Make sure you select **Fee Code 02** in the ‘Personal Details’ section. This indicates you are going to apply for student loan.
3. Make sure you put ‘**August 2021’** as your end date at Beechen Cliff. This means you can select the A Levels or Level 3 qualification you will take at the end of the Upper Sixth and put your grades as **‘pending’**. The school will then add predicted grades.
4. State if you have a disability/special educational need. Universities like to know this so that they can help facilitate your needs when you get there.
5. Talk to Mr Oldham or Miss Mather if you have **extenuating circumstances** we should know of. Again, universities take these very seriously and we can write about them in your reference. These could be things such as: on-going or past physical or mental health issues, difficulties at home e.g. divorce, an ill sibling, or family bereavement.
6. When choosing your courses, ensure you have a range of offers, tending towards the aspirational. If you are predicted ABB, you might go for courses with these typical offers: AAA, AAB, ABB, BBB, BBB/BBC. Talk to your tutor or Miss Mather and make sure you are sure of your most up-to-date predicted grades.

Once you have completed your application, pay and send it. It comes to the school and we then send it to UCAS. If we see an error we will return it to you. You should make the recommended change and then re-send to us. You will not be charged twice!

**Appendix 1: Glossary of Key Terms**

* Undergraduate

This is what you will be for your first degree. In other words, you are studying to graduate (i.e. you are ‘under graduating’). You will either study for a BA (Hons) in the arts subjects or a BSc (Hons) for the sciences BEng (Hons) for engineering. These are all known as ‘Bachelors’ degrees. There are also some course specific names for degrees, such as an LLB in Law. These are all equivalent qualifications. After your degree, you may want to stay on to study for a Postgraduatequalification, otherwise known as a ‘Masters’ or ‘Doctorate’ degree. These are higher qualifications and similarly you would receive an MA, MSc, MEng, LLM or PhD.

* Entry Requirements

In September you must find out your predicted grades from your subject teachers. You can use these as guidance for which courses to apply for. You must be realistic in your choices. Many people choose to be ambitious; however it is worth having one ‘back up’ choice which has lower entry requirements so that you are more likely to have at least one offer from your five choices. This also allows for the possibility of you not reaching your predicted grades in summer.

Most universities make offers based on three A-level grades e.g. ABB, which are not subject-specific. For some courses, the university can request for you to have a certain grade in the specific subject e.g. to study Maths at Reading University, the normal entry requirement is ABB with an A in Maths A-Level. You can find out entry requirements for all courses on the UCAS website, on university websites and in prospectuses.

Some universities make offers based on points. This takes into consideration students studying other qualifications, such as BTECs. You can find a table explaining the new points tariffs on the UCAS website.

* Russell Group

This is a group of around 20 top universities in the UK. It is worth noting that there are some excellent universities that are not included in this group e.g. Bath. Typically Russell Group universities are working universities with major research facilities and are recognised globally as being respected establishments producing top quality graduates.

* Oxbridge

This just means Oxford and Cambridge universities. These are widely viewed as the top two universities in the country (but not necessarily for all subjects). You can only apply to one or other, not both, in each application year, and this counts as one of your five UCAS choices. Terms are shorter but far more intense and they have a very different teaching approach to other universities, comprising tutorials/supervisions of 1:1 or 1:2 often with world-leading experts. You will need to be looking to get at least an A\* and two As at A level to think about applying to these. You usually have to do further entry tests and/or submit written work before you may be offered an interview and your application has to be sent off by mid-October rather than January.

* Campus universities

These are universities where all the departments and facilities, including first year accommodation, are on one site. Both Bath University and Bath Spa University are good examples of this. It can be very convenient but it can also mean you are in a little bubble away from the real world. It can make it easier to get to know new people quickly. Usually second and third year students have to move away from the campus into private accommodation as there is only accommodation on campus for first year students.

* City universities

Some universities have their buildings mixed in among the regular shops, houses and businesses in the rest of the city, although they are usually quite close to each other. Bristol University is a good example of this. It can mean that you find yourself a bit lost at first but it has the advantage of not just being around other students and being able to better explore the city you are living in.

* University League Tables

There are a lot of these done by all sorts of organisations, but be very careful with them. They can be useful but you need to look beyond the rank order. The top universities will be good at all the subjects they offer, whereas the lower end ones will be good at some things but not all. For example, Bath Spa University is very good for courses in education and teaching but other subjects are more variable. Other interesting things to look for are employability rates, dropout rates, and student satisfaction ratings.

* Former Polytechnics

You may hear some people being a bit contemptuous about some universities because they used to be something called a ‘polytechnic’. Generally, you should ignore this as some of these former polytechnics such as Oxford Brookes, are now of equal standing, if not better than, some long established ‘traditional’ universities.

* Private Universities

There are a few private universities that you can apply to directly. They usually cost more money but can be suitable for some people. Examples include Buckinghamshire University and the New College of Humanities.

* Universities abroad

UCAS only covers universities in the UK. It may be worth looking at other countries. The USA offers lots of choice but is very expensive. Often, however, American universities do offer scholarships and other means of financial help. The Republic of Ireland has some good universities – for example, there are two excellent universities in Dublin but they are hard to get in to. The Netherlands have has many universities offering lectures and classes in English and the fees are much lower. Similarly in Hong Kong the lectures are in English but the distance from home will not suit everyone. If you are not fazed by moving far from home, Australia and New Zealand are worth looking into but might prove expensive unless you are dual nationals. There are plenty of other places to study abroad – but make sure you check if lectures are in English. It is worth noting that most university courses offer the chance to study on a ‘year abroad’ in third year, meaning you could attend a UK university, but have the chance to go to a different university just for a year.

* Deferred Entry

This is where you apply for courses starting in the following year. For example, most of you will apply in autumn 2018 to go to university in September 2019, but a deferred entry application would be for September 2020. This would enable you to have a gap year with a guaranteed place already sorted for the following year if you meet the terms of your offer.

**Appendix 2: Useful Websites for Careers and Course Research**

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| **ucas.com and/or search.ucas.com** | UCAS undergraduate course search tool. You can either search by course, provider or location, or you can browse through subjects. |
| [**ukcoursefinder.com**](http://www.ukcoursefinder.com/)  | Try the ‘study interests’ questionnaire to pin-point your interests in 150+ degree disciplines. Search for courses within Low, Medium or High tariff points bands. |
| **http://sacu-student.com/** | Independent & impartial source of careers information to students, parents and teachers |
| [**opendays.com**](http://www.opendays.com) | A calendar of all the open events at HE institutions throughout the country. |
| [**unistats.direct.gov.uk**](http://www.unistats.direct.gov.uk/) | Compare HE courses using official data from satisfaction scores in the National Student Survey, **the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey,** plus jobs and salaries after study. |
| [**university.which.co.uk**](http://university.which.co.uk/) | Search for degree courses (filter by predicted grades & location) – search results show % of applicants receiving a place & other data. Explore subject guides and University profiles. |
| [**thescholarshiphub.org.uk**](http://justgohigher.org.uk) | Search for UK scholarships, grants or bursaries for university using this database of funding for UK/EU undergraduates and postgraduates. |
| **bestcourse4me.com** | Find out what degree and career your A Level subjects could lead to. See earnings by age for different degree subjects. |

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| --- | --- |
| **Nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk** | Helpful job profiles for looking up any career and entry requirements |
| **Careerpilot.org.uk** | Research job sectors (includes South West region info), plus a guide to post-18 options.  |
| **Prospects.ac.uk** | Graduate careers website with job sector info, job profiles, ‘What jobs would suit me?’ and ‘What can I do with my degree?’ tools.  |
| **Apprenticeships.gov.uk** | The National Apprenticeship Service website. Look into Types of Apprenticeships available, plus search/apply for vacancies. |
| **Studentladder.co.uk** | Information on choices after year 13, including school leave programmes, work placements and internships, plus other articles. |
| **Notgoingtouni.co.uk** | Info on other post-18 options, including apprenticeships, gap years, distance learning, jobs, HE at College and sponsored degrees. |
| **TheBigChoice.com** | Student jobs, school leaver programmes and work placement information. |
| **Careermap.co.uk** | Apprenticeships and School Leaver jobs shown on a map of the local area. |
| **Allaboutschoolleavers.co.uk** | Explains your options at 18. Job search and sections with advice on CVs, applications and interviews. |

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