

MILL HILL SCHOOL

Higher Education Guidance Programme

2012 Entry

CONTENTS

Higher Education Applications Timetable	2
Going to University: Why? What? Where? When? How?	4
The UCAS Applications Process 1: How the application process works	12
University Interviews	14
What happen after the A Level results are published (Including Clearing)	15
List of degree courses sorted into related subject groups	17
Checklist for universities and courses	23
<u>Appendix 1</u>	
Additional Test Information 2012 Entry	

Higher Education Applications Timetable 2011-2012

1. Preparation and Research (Lower Sixth)

Thursday 17th February Course Finder Questionnaire

Thursday 10th March Introduction to HE process (LHS)

Summer Term

Wednesday 4th May Lower Sixth Form Parents' Meeting 6.30pm - Gordon Collins from CES London & LHS

Early May AS examinations begin.

June 16th Personal Statement - guidance session with LHS (PSHRE)

Mid June UCAS Apply 2012 goes live & LHS will notify all students on the buzzword required. Students may then register themselves on Apply 12 & start filling in their applications

August AS examination results published Thursday 18th August

Early September A level grade predictions for use in UCAS applications published

Visits to universities (preferably on Open Days) should be made between May and September. To minimise disruption to lessons, only 2 such visits may be made in school time.

2. The Applications Process (Upper Sixth)

Oxford and Cambridge and Medical Schools

It is very important that the following deadlines are noted and adhered to. Every year, students fail to submit their applications by the specified deadlines and then expect their applications to be able to go off to UCAS as soon as they have completed their section. This is not possible, as LHS has to check all sections of the student application and approve it. The reference then has to be completed by the Housemaster and submitted to LHS for approval. The Headmaster then has to approve the reference before LHS can send the application off to UCAS. As the end of half term and full term are exceptionally busy periods for all staff, applications that fail to meet the specified deadlines will not be guaranteed to be sent off to UCAS and may have to wait until school re-opens after the holidays.

1st October UCAS form (Oxbridge/Medical/Dentistry/Vet Science School applicants) and Oxford/ Cambridge Application Form online (Oxbridge only)

15th October Deadline for receipt of UCAS form and Oxford/Cambridge Application

Form by LHS to UCAS and Oxford/Cambridge respectively – as we break up for half term on the 14th October, applications must have been submitted by that date

November	Written work may need to be prepared to be sent; check College prospectus/web site for details.
Nov/December	Oxford and Cambridge interviews, which may include written tests in some subjects (consult prospectus & refer to additional booklet given out by LHS on ‘Additional Tests’)
Early January	All results of Oxbridge applications will have been notified.

(b) Other Universities and Courses

7 th October	MHS deadline for completion of UCAS applications to Tutors to guarantee applications are sent off by LHS to UCAS by October Half Term of 14 th October. No applications will be dealt with over the Half Term holiday.
7 th December	MHS deadline for late UCAS applications to be submitted to Tutors to guarantee applications are sent off by LHS to UCAS by December 14 th .
14 th December	Deadline for completed application forms to be submitted to UCAS by LHS. End of Term. UCAS closes over the Christmas and New Year period. Any applications failing to meet the deadline, will not be dealt with by LHS until school re-opens in January 2012. <i>N.B. Applications reaching UCAS in December cannot expect such a high probability of leading to offers as ones submitted earlier than this.</i>

3. Post-application Timetable (Upper Sixth)

October to April	Applicants may be called for interview and will receive rejections or offers. Not all institutions interview before making offers. You cannot reply to your offers until you have heard from all of your institutions. You reply on Track.
From February	Grant Forms are normally supplied direct from your Local Education Authority. If you are not sure of whether or not you qualify for an award, please consult your LEA (around February time). Student Finance applications can also be made online and the student finance

site lists all the deadlines and relevant information:

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

May	Deadlines for replies to offers by candidates are specified by UCAS with the last decision notification. Failure to reply by the date specified will lead to UCAS making the decision for you.
June	UCAS selection procedures completed. Candidates will have selected one firm and one insurance offer - all other offers have to be rejected. Briefing session on "What to do when you get your A level results" This includes guidance on how to secure a place through Clearing.
June	Candidates with no offers will automatically be entered for Clearing and will receive Clearing instructions from UCAS. UCAS Extra (early Clearing also starts in February for those students holding no offers after the January 15 th deadline with UCAS)
August	Publication of A level results Thursday 18 th August 2011. CANDIDATES NEED TO BE AVAILABLE AT THIS TIME. Staff will be available at the School when the A level results are published, to offer advice and help with further course applications. Candidates who hold no offers or who have failed to qualify for any of their offers will automatically receive Clearing instructions from UCAS via TRACK.

Going to University: Why? What? Where? When? How?

The key events in your academic career over the next 18 months are likely to be:

June 2011	sit actual AS exams
August 2011	AS exam results published
October 2011	apply to universities
June 2012	sit A2 examinations
August 2012	A level results published
October 2012	start university course or Gap Year

So in about 18 months' time most of you will be about to start your university courses. The **work** you put in between now and then, and the **planning** and **decisions** you make over the coming months will affect the direction your life will take at that stage. The purpose of this talk is to explain to you what you need to do in order to complete this transition successfully.

The universities to which you will apply this autumn will know your AS results and will take them into account when decided whether or not to offer you a place. However, any offer they make will be **conditional upon your performance at A level in June 2012**. Although you

don't know what A level grades you will get in a year's time, or even what AS grades you will get this summer, your Mock AS exam grades plus your academic performance so far this year, will give you some indication of the general level of your academic performance.

Academically, you will fit into one of the following five groups:

- (i) AAA* or AAA at A level. You have the widest possible choice of degree opportunities, including (possibly) Oxbridge, Medicine or Veterinary Science.
- (ii) BBC or better. You should be sound prospects for the majority of courses and universities.
- (iii) Around CCD. You may need to consider less popular universities, or less popular subjects at popular universities.
- (iv) DDD to EE. For you a less popular subject at a less popular university is likely.
- (v) If you seriously under-perform in your A levels you may need to re-sit them either at a private tutorial college or a Sixth Form College.

All of you will be able to go on to a university course if you wish, provided that you make sensible applications at the right level at the right time. There are also American universities to apply to: this is an independent application process and a visit to the 'Fulbright Commission' web site is essential for guidance & advice.

All university applications are made via UCAS. Virtually every institution you might wish to apply to is now covered by this application process. The only exceptions are those of you wishing to study Art or some Drama courses, where different arrangements apply. If you're interested in an Art or Design course at somewhere other than a university, then see Mr. Ross and equally, Mr. Proudlock with regard to Drama School applications outside of the UCAS system.

The UCAS database is available to pupils at school. It can be found at www.ucas.com This database will give you a great deal of information about the courses which are available and the universities themselves, and will also give you all the information necessary to fill the forms in. In addition, paper copies of the UCAS Big Guide will be available in the Piper Library; the edition for entry in 2012 will be published around June 2011.

WHY?

A degree is not a passport to employment nor is it a professional qualification. However it is a hurdle to entry to many professions and some professions will grant exemption from training/examination requirements of you hold a degree in a relevant subject (e.g. medicine, surveying, law, and engineering).

A degree is something you should look upon as an education in the broadest sense. In 95% of cases, you DON'T go to university to get specific job training. A first degree is a general academic training to develop your intellect and other skills; you will usually get your job training AFTER you graduate.

On the negative side, you will continue to be a financial drain on your parents and so you will not be fully independent.

Also, if you currently rely on your teachers to make you work, be warned now. At university you will be entirely personally responsible for your work. If you find it hard to organise

yourself now, it will be 10 times harder at university.

So you must ask yourself whether you really want to do it. Is it going to be worth the effort and the investment of your time and your parents' money?

On the positive side, you will come out more mature, more rounded, better able to work to deadlines, to manage large work assignments, to work in a team, to take responsibility for your own ideas and actions and so on. You will meet other people of your own age and intellectual ability from all kinds of backgrounds.

A degree course will also help you to develop a wide range of skills in addition to you academic knowledge and skills, which will make you more attractive to a prospective employer. See the list of qualities which employers look for, on the next page.

You will be expected to contribute about 70% to your own learning process rather than the 30% at GCSE and the 50% at A level: in a word the quality of the teaching you will receive may be variable (lecturers receive no training in how to teach) and no one will chase you up if you cannot get out of bed in the morning.

WHAT?

You need to consider carefully what you want to study. Unless you want to be something like an engineer, a lawyer or a doctor then your career will not have to determine the course you take at university.

Look at the breakdown of the destinations of recent Modern Languages graduates on the next page.

<u>Destinations of Graduates in Modern Languages</u>	
EMPLOYMENT	50%
ADMIN/MANAGEMENT	17%
SALES/MARKETING	20%
FINANCIAL WORK	15%
LITERARY WORK	4%
LIBRARY WORK	8%
HEALTH/WELFARE	5%
OTHER	31%
ACADEMIC STUDY	8%
TEACHING	10%
UNEMPLOYED	11%
OTHER	21%

They go into all kinds of jobs. Similarly, if you study **engineering** you may still end up in the City or in business, so in most cases your degree subject will give no indication of the kind of career you end up in afterwards; this fact is often hard to grasp, but it's TRUE!

Also consider what employers are looking for:

Graduate Recruitment: What Employers are looking for

There are two types of graduate employers are looking for. First, there are the **subject specialists** (the minority) such as those in engineering, medicine, IT, textile design and so on. Then there are the **generalists** (the majority). Apart from the fast-track management recruiters such as ICI, Shell and Unilever, for whom the class of your degree is very important, most employers are looking for:

- motivation
- enthusiasm
- inter-personal skills
- team-working
- flexibility
- adaptability
- oral communication skills
- initiative
- pro-activity
- problem-solving skills

.... as quoted by the Association of Graduate Recruiters in 'Management Today' magazine.

What kind of course do you want?

Do you want one subject or a mix of subjects: e.g. one language or two, Maths or Maths with Physics or Economics, Pure Maths or something applied? There are lots of combined subject degree courses on offer.

- joint degree courses, where each subject counts equally
- courses offering a major subject with a subsidiary one - e.g. Economics with French
- modular courses, which combine several subjects in varying quantities

A word of caution about combined courses, however. They are well worth considering since they enable you to keep a wider range of options open, but you need to look very carefully at the number of places offered and the applications-to-places ratio. English and Drama is a good example - very attractive but also extremely competitive.

Consider the structure of the course. Do you want all exams or coursework and these? Sandwich course? (i.e. period of study, then period of paid employment, then back to study and so on. Usually lasts 4 years, rather than the usual 3.) Do you want to spend part of your course in another European country?

The most difficult subjects to get into are Medicine, Law, English and Business courses at the more popular universities. Most branches of engineering are easier (e.g. production engineering, because no-one knows what it means). Pure sciences are easier than they used to be. I reckon Materials Science is a good bet.

What if you have no idea about what you want to do?

You **MUST** start thinking and researching **NOW!** What sources of information can you go for help if you really haven't got much idea of what you would like to study?

- Course finder test this term will help you to identify the kinds of courses likely to be most appropriate for you
- 'UCAS Big Guide' (either the paper or the electronic version) is very useful to browse through
- UCAS web site **www.ucas.com**
- look at the list of degree courses grouped together in subject areas, to be found near the back of this booklet
- talk to Miss Sharples/Miss Ekwulugo
- if you joined ISCO in the Fifth Form, the School can also arrange for you to have a professional interview with a careers guidance specialist at no charge

WHERE?

Do you want to be in London? If you've grown up in London, it would be sensible to spend three or four years in another part of the country to broaden your horizons. London is dearer, may offer you poor accommodation, the sports facilities will be out of town, travel will be more difficult and more expensive, some institutions can be rather impersonal and in not very 'pleasant' areas.

Universities in the south of England are often (but not always) harder to get into, partly because they are popular places to live in.

Do you want a campus university or do you want to be part of a city centre?

Do you want a collegiate university? Only three - Oxford, Cambridge, Durham.

Do you want modern buildings and facilities or elegant old-fashioned buildings with a sense of atmosphere but possibly with cramped facilities?

Beware of judging universities (or departments) simply by the A level grade offers they are likely to make. The HE applications business is basically a market place; you are the

customers, and the universities are the businesses trying to fill up with as many of the right kind of customer as possible. The A level grades largely reflect the balance between supply and demand. E.g. demand for Textile Management at Lampeter would be low, so might get a CCD offer, but the demand for History at the London School of Economics would be very high, so might get a BBB offer. This does NOT mean that the History course at LSE is necessarily better, better-taught or more likely to lead to a job afterwards. It is not sensible simply to ask ‘where is a good place to go to for’ Good in what respect? Teaching? Number of research papers published? Size of departments? Ratio of female to male students? Employment prospects of its graduates? There isn’t a simple answer to the question ‘Where is the best place to go?’ You must put in the research to find which courses you like and are right for you.

University League Tables. These exist and are published – **overall league tables** for the universities, and leagues tables **by subject**. Anyone who is professionally involved in advising about university entrance will warn you to treat them very cautiously indeed! Why?

- They usually take a combination of factors into account – UCAS points requirements, library facilities, completion rates, teaching quality, research ratings and so on.
- Not all of these factors will be relevant to you – and not even necessarily relevant to an undergraduate course
- Universities or courses with high league table positions might not be right for you as an individual – perhaps not your sort of course, perhaps wrong region
- Not all degree subjects have a league table – it depends on whether that subject has been inspected yet

Most experts will say “by all means have a look at the league tables but it is much more important to **check prospectuses etc.** that the course is right for you, and that you **visit the university** to see whether the university is right for you.”

If you would like to spend part of your degree course at a **European University**, the **ERASMUS** (European Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students) scheme can enable you to do this. Not all universities participate in the scheme, so you will need to check yourself. Individual universities set up partnerships with other universities in Europe and you can then spend part of your degree course at another European university. The ERASMUS scheme gives each participating student an additional grant to reflect their extra expenses. More details are available in the Careers section in the Piper Library.

WHEN?

This basically comes down to whether or not you want to take a Gap Year.

If you are embarking on a long course e.g. medicine, engineering, architecture, then you should think very carefully before taking the extra year. Also if you are continuing in the same discipline as those you took at school i.e. you are continuing with Chemistry then think about how much you will forget in a year off. However if you wish to take a new subject at university then a year off may be a good idea if you would like a break. But will you want to return to study after getting a job and starting to earn real money?

You will receive information about Gap Year and travel opportunities next term.

It is also worth noting that it is perfectly possible to go to university several years after you have left school; many universities have a significant proportion of 'mature students'. For most, it is better to go either straight from school or after a Gap Year, but if you do not do that, you have not excluded yourself from the possibility of going to university at a later stage of your life.

HOW?

The way to maximise your chances of ending up on a degree course that you enjoy at a university you want to be at is to start researching and planning NOW. The more unsure you are about what you want to do or where you want to go, the more important it is that you make an early start on this; the later you leave it, the more likely it is that your application may get rejected or that you apply for an inappropriate course.

The sources of advice and information available to you are extensive and are listed elsewhere in these Notes.

WHAT NOW?

Your academic performance and potential are the most important factors in your university application, although they are certainly not the ONLY factor. Your GCSE results will be considered – particularly the number of A's and A*'s you achieved. Also the results of your AS examinations this summer, for which the UCAS system awards UCAS points (*60 for an A, 50 for a B, 40 for a C and so on*). Also the A level grades which the School will predict for you, which will be based on your work during this year and on your performance in AS exams (A* 140, A 120, B 100, C 80, D 60 & E 40). You will be told early next term what these grade predictions will be. They are not negotiable and will be the best professional judgement your teachers can make, taking all relevant factors into account. They should be used as a realistic basis on which to base your choice of course and university.

Academic performance is only one factor amongst several which admissions tutors will take into account. Here is some information recently supplied by Nottingham University. They assess the written applications (for medicine, in this case) according to four components:

- *academic standard*
- *background research*
- *non-academic ability*
- *insight and motivation*

Of those they then interview, they assess **personal qualities** etc. at the interview. Candidates' **work experience** (both medical and non-medical) is scored carefully; work experience arranged by the candidates him or herself is scored more highly than that organised for them. Attendance on a careers information course on medicine is expected. Positions of responsibility are given credit, as are extra-curricular activities, including sport, music, D of E etc.

So you now need to

Talk. To your teachers, your Tutor, your Housemaster, Heads of Department, university admissions staff, university students, your parents and their friends. It's like a jigsaw puzzle, and you'll only build up the whole picture piece by piece.

Research by reading prospectuses and other reference material in the Careers Library, get hold of the students' union alternative prospectuses, write off to universities for your own copies of prospectuses. Use the COURSEFINDER ACTION PLAN SHEETS. Use the UCAS website, which is directly linked to all universities' and colleges' websites: www.ucas.com

Visit the places you are considering applying to, preferably on Open Days, when you will be more welcome and will get a better programme laid on for you. Talk to the students there, as well as the academic staff. Use the student checklist you have been given to help you.

Plan. Every one of you should now sit down and draw up an ACTION PLAN which identifies what you need to do between now and October. This plan should cover academic targets, identification of what information you need to research, where, and how, which university open days you plan to attend, work experience, careers experience courses, who you need to talk to, and so on.

And finally.....

It's YOUR responsibility to research and select your courses and institutions. This is going to be the most important decision you have made in your life, and probably for the first time you will have control over the decision making. Others can give you information and advice, but I can't tell you where the perfect course for you is; you must find out for yourself and make your own judgements. Up to now, you've always had someone else to blame if your plans didn't turn out right, but now it really is down to you. If you make a success of it that will be to your credit but if you mess it up, that will be down to you also.

The UCAS Applications Process

‘UCAS’ stands for the ‘Universities and Colleges Applications System’. It is the single, national organization, through which all UK degree course applications are made. In some countries you can apply to as many universities as you like; in the UK you can apply for a maximum of 5 courses; you fill in one application form on line via the internet. UCAS then sends it to each of the universities to which you have applied. Here is how the process works.

- 1 After discussing your courses with your Tutor etc, you complete the UCAS Application Form on line. **Keep a printout for interview preparation.**
- 2 The School adds a confidential reference, including A level grade predictions, and submits your application on line to UCAS. A photocopy is kept on file.
- 3 UCAS acknowledges receipt and sends you your official UCAS Personal Identification Number (quote this on all correspondence – this is also your ‘Tracking Number’ to follow the process of your application online – keep this number safe, as it is personal to you, school does not have a record of your number).
- 4 UCAS sends a copy of your application to all 5 institutions electronically. Officially, the institutions are NOT able to see the other applications on your form.
- 5 Universities make decisions on your application – they may require an interview first.
- 6 Universities notify you of their decision and UCAS confirms these to you.
- 7 When all 5 universities have made their decision, you have to decide which 2 offers to accept; this will be around **May**. You will be told by UCAS when your personal reply deadline is; that information will be flagged up on Track.

Of those who apply through the normal pre-A level route, around two thirds get offers. Of these, two thirds qualify for their places in due course. Of the remainder, who then enter the Clearing process, typically around half still get on to a degree course for that year. Only around 10% of applicants end up taking up their insurance offer.

Mill Hill’s Applications Procedure

It is very important that you read the following sections in the book titled ‘Degree Course Offers’ which relate to the subject(s) in which you are interested:

- Number of applicants per place;
 - Planning your UCAS personal statement;
 - Interview questions;
 - Reasons for rejection.
- They will give you a lot of information and ideas about:**
- What work experience you ought to plan for, and how to write about it;
 - What is important to include in your personal statement (the examples of interview questions may give you some idea of what to write about in your application);
 - What the Admissions Tutors will be looking for;
 - How to convince them of your suitability for and commitment to the course;
 - How to avoid sabotaging your own application!

Reasons for Rejection

The following list of reasons for rejection is taken from information supplied by several universities across a wide range of courses:

- Hadn't read the prospectus
- Lack of outside interests
- Casual approach to learning
- Unmotivated
- Badly drafted Personal Statement
- Under-estimated the work load
- Over-confidence at interview
- Lack of social, cultural, sporting interests or team work
- Knowledge of chosen subject lacked any depth
- Lack of clear reason for choice of courses
- 'Has dreamed about being a doctor/lawyer since a very early age'
- The candidate brought his parents, who answered all the questions for him
- Unstable personality
- Known criminal activity

Some of these are extraordinary, but most are quite common weaknesses, which you need to make sure you avoid.

Once you have started your research, you should start planning for any **work experience** which you intend to undertake either this summer or in the Autumn Half Term.

You should also start drafting the **main sections of your UCAS form** in the Summer Term – especially your **Personal Statement**; you will be given detailed information and advice on how to go about this.

You should complete your UCAS and submit it to your Tutor by **the end of September**. Your Tutor will then draft your reference, incorporating reports from all of your subject teachers. This is then checked by your Housemaster/Housemistress who may make some changes or additions, then by Miss Sharples for overall accuracy and quality. Finally it goes to the Headmaster for authorising and is then submitted electronically by LHS.

An application usually gets submitted to UCAS about 1 week after it has been passed to your Tutor, but may take longer in busy periods (e.g. the fortnight before Half Term).

The School Reference

This will be a detailed and honest account of your academic and extra-curricular career to date and a realistic assessment of your likely A level performance next summer. It will emphasise your positive qualities but will not say positive things about you which are not true! It will include both your actual AS grades and our predictions for your overall A level grades.

Your A level grade predictions are NOT negotiable; if they are lower than what you feel you need in order to apply for the courses you have in mind, do NOT go to the Heads of Department and try to negotiate your grades up. The grades you have been given are the best professional assessment of your likely performance next summer that can be made at this stage in the light both of your work during the L6 year and of your performance in the AS exams.

How is your UCAS Application dealt with?

Admissions Tutors are basically looking for good students in sufficient numbers to fill their places. In particular they will look at:

- a) The appearance and quality of your application form.
- b) Your GCSE and AS grades.
- c) Your A level subject choices and grade predictions.
- d) Self motivation.
- e) Intellectual ability.
- f) The likelihood of you actually turning up a year later if offered a place.
- g) Those that will make a contribution both in the department and in the university as a whole.
- h) People who are likely to get the required grades.
- i) Suitability for chosen course.
- j) The strength of your application in relation to the other applications for that course.

Once your application has been considered by your five universities, they may or may not interview you before making their decision. Practice varies between courses and between universities - some interview, some don't.

Interviews

1. Dress smartly and cleanly. A jacket and tie is not expected, but tatty jeans and an old jumper are not very sensible either. Arrive in good time; better early than late.
2. Read any appropriate literature from the department/university and read the section on 'Interview Questions' from the relevant subject section of 'Degree Course Offers'.
3. Try to find out as much as you can beforehand about what the course you have applied for is like, what the options are, the size of the department etc.
4. Try to remember the names of any staff who have written to you.
5. Most questions in an interview will be based on the information given in your UCAS application form; this is the skeleton, and the flesh is added in the interview. Make sure, therefore, that you are familiar with what you wrote in your application. Most questions will not be simply factual, but will aim to draw out something more - what you did, why you did it, how you evaluated it. Where possible, questions should not be answered with

a straight 'yes' or 'no', but with a full reply which adds fresh information about yourself.

6. Typical questions are:
 - Why did you apply for this course?
 - Why do you want to study at this university/college?
 - What do you regard as your strengths/weaknesses?
 - What is the most interesting topic you have studied so far in your specialist subject?
 - What have you done outside school which is related to your chosen subject?
 - What do you regard as your most significant achievement so far?
 - What are your views on any issues that are currently in the news?
 - What do you know about how this subject is studied at university?
7. Read up on any topical issues relating to your subject, and be prepared to discuss them.
8. If you have made claims to a particular interest or skill on your UCAS form, make sure that you can answer reasonably detailed questions about it.
9. Be prepared to give evidence of relevant reading/work that you have undertaken outside your set A level programme of study; this is particularly true of Arts subjects.
10. Don't lie. Don't try to be what you're not. Don't talk of things of which you have no knowledge - you may well end up looking foolish. Don't waffle - keep to the point.
12. Be responsive to your interviewer. Don't keep on talking if he/she has glanced at his/her watch a couple of times or started tidying up his/her papers. On the other hand, be more forthcoming if you are clearly being expected to elaborate on your answer.
13. Take a list of questions with you (on paper and, not too many). You will probably be asked near the end of the interview if you have any questions; if not, then it is up to you to say something like, 'I wonder if I could ask one or two questions, please'.
14. The Careers section in the Piper Library has a booklet entitled 'Getting into University and College'; in it you will find more advice on interviews.

What Happens after the Selection Process is Complete?

Offers of Places and your Response

There are three possible types of response you may get to your application:

C - conditional offer, based on 3 A level grades

F - firm (i.e. unconditional) offer - normally for post-A level applicants only

R – rejection

If you have taken advice and made sensible and appropriate applications, there is a good chance that you will have received a number of offers. Once you have received all 5 replies you will then be told by UCAS the date by which you have to select TWO of them. One will be your first choice ('CF' – conditional offer firmly accepted) and the other will be your insurance offer ('CI' – conditional offer, insurance). If you fail to reply by your deadline, UCAS will automatically reject you from ALL 5 applications. YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!

When the A level Results Come Out

One of the following will happen:

- You have qualified for your CF offer. This will be confirmed in writing to you and you then decide either to accept it or to withdraw from the system altogether for that season.
- You have narrowly missed your CF offer but they still accept you. (This is at the institution's absolute discretion). This will be confirmed in writing to you and you then decide either to accept it or to withdraw from the system altogether for that season.
- You have failed to qualify for your CF offer, but have qualified for your CI offer. This will be confirmed in writing to you and you then decide either to accept it or to withdraw from the system altogether for that season.
- You have failed to qualify for either of your offers but your CI institution still decides to accept you. You can either accept it or withdraw from UCAS altogether for that season. If you don't want to accept your CI and would like to try for another institution through Clearing*, then you will have to try to persuade them to reject you first.

YOU CAN'T REJECT AN OFFER AND THEN ENTER CLEARING unless you have exceeded your highest offer requirement. This facility is available for 5 days from results day.

- You have failed to qualify for either of your offers and are not accepted by either institution. You will automatically be entered for Clearing. (Explain briefly how Clearing works.)
- You are holding no offers. You will be entered for Clearing* automatically.

*(*Clearing is the process whereby all those applicants who do not hold offers are able to apply for any of the places at universities which have not yet been filled. Clearing comes into operation immediately after the A level results have been published in August, and you will be briefed about it in more detail in your last term of the Upper Sixth.)*

Miscellaneous Points

1. **Classes of degree.** Most first degrees are Honours Degrees. They are awarded at five levels:

First Class
Upper Second (called a '2-1')
Lower Second (called a '2-2')
Third
Pass

Those who fail even to qualify for an Honours Degree at *Pass* level may possibly be awarded an Ordinary Degree.

Most universities award **Bachelor Degrees** (BA, BSc), but some Scottish universities Award MA's, and Oxbridge BA's are converted to MA's three years after graduation. In

reality, it makes no difference what your degree is called - it's how well you did in it, what you covered, and the kind of personal qualities you have developed which are going to be the crucial factors in your subsequent career success.

2. **Sandwich courses** are courses where academic study is mixed with practical work experience. Many of the courses run by the former polytechnics are sandwich courses, which reflect the practical/technical nature of those courses.

Thick sandwich - year in, year out, 2 years in, for example

Thin sandwich - 2 terms in, 1 term out, 2 terms in, 1 term out etc.

In both cases, this total length of the course is normally FOUR years.

3. **Master's Degrees** are normally postgraduate degrees - i.e. you do an Honours degree for 3 years first and then stay on for an extra year to do a Master's. Some first degree courses are now being extended to 4 year courses leading directly to a Master's degree, but watch out! Some universities are offering courses leading to 'Master in Science'; these are NOT proper Master's degrees, which is 'Master of Science'.

Degree Courses organised by Subject Group

Information on these courses is available through the UCAS website: www.ucas.ac.uk

GENERAL AREAS

KEYWORDS

Group A: Medicine & Dentistry

Medicine
Dentistry

Group B: Subjects allied to Medicine

Anatomy	Nutrition or Dietetics
Audiology	Occupational Hygiene
Biomedical Science	Occupational Therapy
Chiropody	Ophthalmics
Chiropractice	Optometry
Deaf Studies	Ophthoptics
Dental Technology	Orthotics & Prosthetics
Health Science/Studies	Pharmacology
Medical Lab Science	Pharmacy
Medical Tech	Physiotherapy
Mental Health	Podiatry
Midwifery	Radiography
Neurosciences	Speech Therapy
Nursing	Toxicology

Group C: Biological Sciences

Aquaculture	Genetics
Biochemistry	Human Ecology
Biological Science	Immunology
Biology	Marine Biology
Biomolecular Science	Microbiology
Biophysical Science	Molecular Biology
Botanic Studies	Psychology*
Ecology	Zoology
Environmental Biology	

*not solely as a Social Science

Group D: Agriculture & related subjects

Animal Care	Food Marketing Science
Agricultural Biology	Food Science
Agriculture/Agric Tech	Forestry
Conservation	Horticulture
Countryside Management	Landscape Management
Ecology	Resource Management
Estate Management	Veterinary Science
Fishery Science	Wood/Timber Technology

Group F: Physical Sciences

Analytical Chemistry	Foundation Science
Archaeology*	Geography*
Astronomy	Hydrography
Astrophysics	Industrial Chemistry
Cartography	Marine Studies
Chemistry	Material Science/Studies
Earth Science	Mining
Energy Studies	Oceanography
Engineering Physics	Physical Science
Environmental Management	Physics
Environmental Science	Pollution Control or Mgt

*without a significant Humanities element

Group G: Mathematical Sciences & Informatics

Artificial Intelligence	Mathematics in Computing
Business Info Tech	Mathematics Stats/Comp
Cognitive Science	Quantitative Analysis
Computer Science/Studies	Real Time Systems
Computing In Business	Robotics
Data Processing	Software Engineering
Industrial Info Tech	Statistics
Industrial Technology	Systems Analysis
Logistics	Systems Design
Mathematics	Systems Modeling
Mathematics for Business	

Group H/J: Engineering & Technology

Aeronautical Engineering	Mechanical Engineering
Automobile Engineering	Metallurgy
Biotechnology	Microelectronics
Ceramics and Glass	Microstructural Eng
Chemical Engineering	Minerals Estate Mgt
Civil Engineering	Minerals Tech
Clothing Engineering	Mining
Communication Engineering	Naval Architecture
Computer Aided Eng	Offshore Engineering
Control Engineering	Petroleum Engineering
Digital Systems Eng	Physical Electronics
Electrical Engineering	Plant Engineering
Electronic Engineering	Polymer or Materials Sci
Electronics	Power Engineering
Energy Studies	Printing
Engineering	Production or Indust Eng
Engineering Product Design	Production Management
Engineering Systems	Robotics
Environmental Engineering	Surveying: Building/Land
Foundation Engineering	Surveying: Engineering
Foundation Technology	Surveying: Quantity
General Engineering	Technology/Tech Mgt
Hardware Engineering	Textiles
Integrated Engineering	Video Imaging
Leather Technology	Welding Technology
Manufacturing Eng	Yacht Manufacture/Design
Marine Engineering	
Maritime or Nautical Studies	

Group K: Architecture, Building & Planning

Accommodation Management	Landscape Architecture
Architecture	Planning
Building or Construction	Surveying: Building/Land
Building Services Engineering	Town Planning
Housing	Urban Estate Management
Internal Environment	Urban Studies

Group L/M: Social Studies

Anthropology	Legal Studies
Beauty Therapy	Peace and War Studies
Behavioural Science	Political Economy
Business Law	Politics or Government
Childhood Studies	Popular Culture
Cosmetics	Psychology†
Criminal Justice	Public or Social Admin
Criminology	Public Sector Management
Cultural Studies	Social Administration
Development Studies	Social Policy
Economics	Social Research Methods
Ethnic Studies	Social Science/Studies
Geography*	Social Work
General Social Science	Sociology
Health Science/Studies	Third World Studies
International Relations	Women's Studies
Law	Youth Studies

* unless solely as a Physical Science

† without significant element of Biological Science

Group N: Business & Administrative

Studies

Accountancy	International Marketing
Banking	Land Management
Business Administration	Management Studies
Business Analysis	Manufacturing Management
Consumer Studies	Manufacturing Systems Mgt
European Business	Marketing
European Marketing	Office Communication
Finance	Operational Research
Financial Services	Organisation Studies
Home Economics	Packaging
Hotel/Catering/Institution Mgt	Personnel
Human Resources Mgt	Property Management
Industrial Economics	Public Relations
Industrial Relations	Quality Control/Mgt
Industrial Studies	Retailing
Insurance	Sales/Sales Management
International Business	Secretarial Studies
International Finance	Transport & Distribution

Group P: Mass Communications & Documentation

Advertising	Media Production
Communication Studies	Media Studies
Journalism	Publishing
Librarianship/Info St	Radio or TV Studies

Groups Q/R/T: Languages & Related Disciplines

African Studies	Greek
American Studies	Irish Studies
Applied Language	Italian
Arabic	Japanese or Japanese Studies
Asian Studies	Languages for Business
Caribbean Studies	Latin
Celtic	Latin American Studies
Chinese	Linguistics
Classics	Literary Studies
Comparative Literature	Middle Eastern
Cypriot Studies	Portuguese Studies
English	Russian/Russian Studies
English as Foreign Language	Scandinavian
European Studies	Slavonic
French or French Studies	Spanish/Spanish Studies
German or German Studies	Welsh/Welsh Studies

Group V: Humanities

Ancient History	History of Ideas
Archaeology*	History of Science
Classical Civilisation	Humanities or Modern Studies
Classics	Philosophy
Economic History	Religious Studies
Heritage	Social History
History	Theology
History of Art/Design	

*unless solely as a Physical Science

Group W: Creative Arts

Animation	Fine Art
Art & Design	Furniture Production Mgt
Arts (Related)	Furniture/Art Restoring
Audio Visual Studies	General Arts
Book Binding Studies	Graphic Design
Cinematics	Graphics Technology
Clothing Studies	Music
Creative Arts	Music Technology

Dance
Design Studies
Drama
Fashion
Film Studies

Photographic Arts
Photographic Science
Stage Management
Theatre Studies
Visual Arts/Studies

Group X: Education & Leisure

Academic Studies
Education Management
Education (not Initial Teacher Training))
Education (Primary)
Education (Secondary)
Education (Teacher Training)
Leisure Management
Leisure Studies

Performance/Movement St
Physical Education
Recreational Management
Special Needs
Sports Science/Studies
Teaching Adults
Tourism and Travel

Group Y: Other Combined & General Courses

Combined/General
Combined Studies (Arts)
Combined Studies (Eng)
Combined Studies (Sci)
Combined Studies (Soc S)
Engineering & Business

Engineering & Mod Lang
General Science
Independent Studies
Measurement/Instrument
Society and Technology
Science and Business Studies

Choosing Your Higher Education Courses: A Student Checklist

The Institution

Do I like the location? Is it urban, rural, provincial, by the sea? Does it matter to me?
What are the physical facilities like? (Lecture rooms, laboratories, studios, library etc.)
Do I like the look of the buildings? The grounds? Is there a central campus or are the buildings scattered?
What about the surrounding area? Places of interest, historic buildings, cultural/sporting centres, opportunities of outdoor pursuits?
Do many students live in? Just the first year? The whole period? How much does it cost?
What is the standard of accommodation? Do I get a room to myself?
What are the Common Rooms like?
For students who live out is there enough reasonable accommodation available nearby?
Is it expensive to live out?
Do I need to have my own transport? If so, is there adequate car parking on campus?
Is public transport available? e.g. from halls of residence to department? What does it cost?
How easy will it be for me to go home at week-ends if I need to? What will it cost in fares?
Is there an alternative prospectus written by students? Have I read it?

The Course

Does the course Syllabus look interesting and is it suitable for the career I have in mind?
Is my future occupation one for which my choice of degree course doesn't actually matter?
What are this course's special features? What options are open to me in the 2nd and 3rd year?
Will the course gain me exemption from professional examinations (e.g. in such careers as surveying, accountancy, social work)?
Are my A level subjects appropriate for this course?
What A level grades are likely to be required?
Are candidates normally interviewed before being offered a place?
What is the average intake of students per year? How many applicants per place?
What percentage of graduates from this course gain employment after it?
What is the proportion of women to men?
Is a Gap year a disadvantage/acceptable/encouraged for this course? Is deferred entry allowed?
After offers have been made?
How does the tutorial system work?
Is it possible to transfer between courses after the first year?
For sandwich courses are industrial placements provided or do I make my own arrangements?
How will I be assessed? Continuously? Entirely by examination?
What changes/cut-backs/expansion plans are expected over the next few years?
What do current students think of the course?

Other activities

What are the clubs and societies I might join?
Is my particular interest or hobby catered for?
What are the facilities for sport and physical recreation?
What opportunities are there to participate in musical/other cultural activities?
Is there a student newspaper? Or broadcasting station?
What are the activities organised by the Students' Union?
Are there facilities for language study?
Any special links with universities abroad?
What links are there with activities in the town and that are not university-centered?
What other student services are available e.g. chaplaincy, medical, counseling, welfare?

Careers Counseling

What is the range of career opportunities open to me after graduating in my chosen degree?
What do most graduates do? How easy is it for them to obtain employment?
Are there opportunities for further research?
What help can I expect from the Careers Advisory Service?
Is their information centre well-equipped? Do they provide details of prospective employers?
How will I be helped to meet possible employers? Are "Careers fairs" held?
Do I get assistance in how to apply for a job? Interview practice?
